

AN APPROACH TO CREATING A PROCESS FOR NURTURING AND
SUPPORTING PASTORAL LEADERS IN CROSS-RACIAL
CROSS-CULTURAL SETTINGS

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PROJECT PROPOSAL

ABSTRACT

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The demographics in the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church ,continue to change rapidly with the ethnic population expected to reach forty five percent by the year two thousand fifteen. As pastors are being appointed cross-racially and cross-culturally to churches they are given minimal preparation. The objective of this project is to discover what is required in order to develop an indigenous process for supporting and resourcing pastors who serve in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. The methodology that will be employed is the mixed use research method. Focus groups, covenant support groups and one person interviews will be used.

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INTRODUCTION

The United Methodist Church at its' two thousand eight General Conference adopted as one of its' four areas of focus "Developing Principled Christian Leaders for the Church and the World". Their intent is to engage and develop new leaders with a dynamism that can motivate others to live out the mission of the church. These leaders will be both clergy and laity who have a passion for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The United Methodist Church is a global church with more than eleven million members worldwide with an especially growing population in Africa and Asia. In the United States, the United Methodist Church is beginning to experience the world in its midst with the influx of persons from the global south who make the United States their home.

The United Methodist Church in the United States in a recent study noted its' decline over the past forty years and indicates that if the church in the United States is going to grow, it must grow by a younger and more diverse population. As the church nurtures, educates and develops leadership for this changing dynamic it will be imperative that these new leaders are culturally sensitive. In the author's local context in what is known as the North Georgia Conference the demographic is rapidly changing and the ethnic population is projected to be forty five percent of the population by the year two thousand fifteen. Therefore, churches that were once in all white communities with

all white congregations are experiencing a transition in the racial and cultural composition of those areas.

As a result of this rise in the ethnic population, the church also is experiencing an increase in the number of ethnic persons answering the call to ministry. As the churches in the North Georgia Conference slowly respond to the phenomena of transitioning communities and the growing need to place ethnic pastors, we see these pastors being appointed to white churches. Often these churches are in communities making a racial and cultural transitional and frequently they have a declining membership. In response to these changes the appointive body of the Annual Conference appoints an ethnic pastor to this predominately white congregation in an effort to reach the changing population. When this happens it is termed a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment.

In paragraph 430.4 of the 2008 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church it states: “Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are made as a creative response to increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the church and in its leadership. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments of clergypersons to congregations in which the majority of their constituencies are different from the clergyperson’s own racial/ethnic and cultural background. Annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. When such appointments are made, Bishops, cabinets, and boards of ordained ministry shall provide specific training for the clergy persons so appointed and for their congregations.”¹

¹*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2008), 319.

The preparation and resourcing of pastoral leaders serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings in the United Methodist Church, particularly in North Georgia is becoming an increasing necessity and dilemma. The North Georgia Conference, as well as the other Annual Conferences, will have to consider how these demographic changes are impacting the leadership needs of the church. Because of this shifting leadership emphasis the United Methodist Church has encouraged conferences through the publication of the Board of Ordained Ministry Handbook to bring into the ordained and licensed ministry a new generation of pastors with the ability to reach all of God's people with the gospel and mission of Jesus.

Although the provisions are there, the author has discovered that very few Annual Conferences have an intentional process to ensure that pastoral leaders are prepared to serve in cross-racial, cross cultural appointments. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry has at least three resource books available that offer guidelines for making these types of appointments. The author believes that in addition to having these resources, having an interactive process that pastors could engage would be beneficial. This project is about discovering what is necessary for developing a process for nurturing and resourcing pastors who will serve in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments in the North Georgia Conference.

Focus of Chapters

The first chapter addresses why this concern is of importance to the author's context and how it will be important to the academy as they continue to prepare the next generation of leaders for the church and the world. Because of the growing diversity in this particular context the emerging issue of how to prepare and support pastoral leaders

will be essential. The chapter also covers why this matters to the author through sharing her journey through life and ministry. The second chapter is a review of the literature focusing on authors who are writing about ministry cross-racially and cross-culturally. The author shares how these persons have shaped her thinking concerning this endeavor of preparing leaders to serve in diverse settings.

The third chapter is the foundations section and shows the theoretical foundations of the project. It covers theological, biblical and historical fundamentals for practicing ministry in diverse locales. The fourth chapter examines the methodology used in designing the approach employed in the field experience. It shares where, when and from whom data was collected. The fifth chapter reports the interpretation of the data and how the author evaluated the results in light of whether this process is transferrable. Lastly, the sixth chapter contains a summary and reflections on what could be further explored and how this process might enable others to take the same steps to develop their own process.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The ministry focus of this project is developing and discovering a process of preparing and resourcing pastoral leaders in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings. This includes creating a space where pastors can be supported as they give care and guidance to their congregations. Pastors serving in these appointments are transforming and being transformed by these settings. They need a structure of support and a community of belonging where they can share experiences and strategies for relational and systemic change. Pastors and congregations need intentional preparation as they live into this new way of being as they serve God and the community together. The author discovered that often little or no preparation was given to these pastoral leaders and congregations.

This is beginning to change in some Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church. The 2008 General Conference of the United Methodist Church passed new legislation and a new definition regarding cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments, specifically noted in the introduction to this paper. The new legislation emphasizes the Church's commitment to open itinerancy and inclusiveness. In our 2008 Book of Discipline, paragraph 430 it states that, "Open itinerancy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement."¹

¹*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2008), 319.

The task of preparing pastoral leaders to serve in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings is traditionally given to the Annual Conference Boards of Ordained Ministry in each annual conference and a section in their Board of Ordained Ministry handbook is devoted to Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Ministry.

The author while serving on both the North Georgia Conference Church Development staff and the Connectional Ministries staff has been informed on many occasions of the need for the Annual Conference to act on the disciplinary mandate to prepare and support those serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. This need has been expressed by pastors, congregations and district superintendents. The author also sought out other Annual Conferences to determine their methods for preparing pastors and congregations. She found that some Annual Conferences were doing well in this endeavor yet many were doing little or nothing at all. In North Georgia she did find that some pastors were given a book resource to read but often no other preparation or support is provided.

The author believes that this is important to her context because cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments are occurring more often and pastors and congregations continue to express the need for assistance. The United Methodist Church has recognized that these appointments are becoming part of our norm and less the exception to the rule. Inherent in these appointments in North Georgia is the reality of racism within the society and the church, though this is not the focus of this project. The focus is discovering ways to support pastors as they engage their congregations and their communities.

The author's journey, which inspired this ministry project, was revealed in her spiritual autobiography, context setting and the synergy that evolved from the blending of

these areas of her life and ministry. She believes this project has significance for the church and academy as they continue to prepare a new generation of leaders with the capacity to serve and reach all of God's people with the life saving message of Jesus, our Lord, our Savior, and our Christ.

The Formative Years

The author understands her life most through the metaphor of *journey*. She is constantly on a quest to understand what it means to love and serve God and God's people. She is a curious soul always amazed at the discoveries that find her and teach her about life. Feeling a sense of belonging has always been a part of the author's desire. Her parents, Edward and Claudine, provided places for that to happen through church, family and school family. The people she encountered in these supportive fellowships formed and influenced her life greatly.

The author's formative religious experiences were at Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church in McDonough, Georgia. Her family joined this church when she was two years old. Her family was very active in the life of the church. Her mother taught Sunday school and she made sure her children attended church every Sunday.

The author accepted Jesus as her savior and officially joined the church when she was ten. She walked right down the aisle on her own and a few weeks later she was baptized. She participated in church plays, Sunday school, bible study, vacation bible school, and the choir among other church activities.

The author's father served on various committees in the church and her godmother was the church secretary. As such, Renita spent many Saturdays folding church bulletins. Her mother, her mother's cousin and Renita would often spend the

Fourth of July holiday with the pastor and his family at their home in Atlanta. She felt in the church there were many places that she belonged.

During her sophomore year in college while home for the weekend, Renita announced to the combined Sunday school class of adults and young adults her uncertainty about God's existence. She declared that she wasn't sure that God existed but she was going to check it out. The adults didn't attack her or pronounce that she should not question God. They just listened and continued to let her express her feelings.

They made her feel like she still belonged. A few years later, God would use a stranger to help her hear God's call to serve in the church as an ordained minister. None were more proud than the members of that Sunday school class. Her call to serve the church has been a part of her entire adult identity and her sense of place in the world.

The author's extended biological family; particularly on her mother's side gave her a strong sense of belonging. She spent summers and Christmases with her mother's sisters, nieces and cousins in Tennessee. Because Renita's mother was the only one of her siblings to move away from home, when they went to visit it felt like they were treated like royalty. The family also spent time with her father's family in Georgia who shared many stories of their ancestors that made the author feel like she was part of a great family.

She had so many childhood influences that she finds it hard to name just a few. Her main influences were her teachers. For Renita, her teachers were her extended family. They taught her how to read at an early age, encouraged her to try different things, taught her to walk tall and not slump her shoulders because she was tall and challenged her to love education when she seemed uninterested.

One of the author's first experiences of being in a place where she felt she did not belong was when her parents volunteered her and her brother to be part of a group of children who would integrate the elementary school in her hometown, McDonough, Georgia. This was in 1968 before integration was mandated by the state. She was the only African American in her class. This was in essence her first cross-racial, cross-cultural experience.

It was a lonely existence during the day. She felt strange leaving the all black school where her friends, her teachers, her school cafeteria, and her playground gave her a strong sense of belonging. They were all left behind in the quest for a better education and in the name of progress. She was told that it was an opportunity afforded her by those who fought too long, bled too profusely and died too young in the civil rights movement.

Yet, every afternoon when she and the black music teacher with whom she rode to school would arrive home, she would immediately go up to the school to see her friends. Oh what a joy it was for that eight year old to be back on her side of town with people like her and where she felt she belonged. Growing up in the insulated and protective environment of an all black school and neighborhood had meant everything to her.

As she reviews this time of being a part of helping to integrate the school system, she realizes that this may have been God's way of preparing her to encounter the exposed and unshielded places in her life. Growing up in a small town in rural Georgia during the sixties and seventies was quite insular. Yet at the same time, she was presented with the hard realities of racism and discrimination.

As she looks back on that time now, she feels it was through this significant moment in her journey that God has prepared her to be a minister in a denomination that has in its history and its current reality the struggle of where and whether certain people belong.

From Formation to Ordination

As Renita has journeyed through ministry, she has formed a circle of friends that have become like family, and when she is with them she feels at home. On the other hand during her process to become an ordained elder, she experienced probationary groups, study groups and various other configurations of groupings. All of the groups were designed to give her and the other participants a sense of connectedness. Yet, often these groups felt forced and had no real foundation for authenticity.

Her first local church ministry experience with groups was as an Associate Pastor in a United Methodist Church whose membership was made up of African Americans. Two of the main groupings in which she participated were a bible study that she led on a weekly basis and the Single's Ministry. What she soon learned as a pastor, particularly serving among those of her peer age, was that she needed another space to belong. She needed a space where she could discuss the issues and concerns of serving in a church that demanded so much of her time. She wanted a group of colleagues who would discover together how to maintain balance while still being faithful to their call.

She desired a place where she could learn and be formed spiritually and learn to develop in the practices of ministry. She discovered such an experience when four of her seminary colleagues decided to join together and participate in a spiritual retreat. They came together for a weekend to experience a time of spiritual formation and to talk about

what was occurring in their ministry settings. It was a great experience and they all vowed to meet regularly. It would be another ten years before they got together again. By that time, two more were added to their number. This time their stint of involvement lasted two consecutive years and it has now been six years since they have convened for a time of reflection.

Throughout the experiences of her life and through reflection on those experiences, the author has always seen the hand of God guiding and protecting her. God has provided the author a sense of place in the world as a minister called to serve God through serving God's people.

Ground Zero: Where Ministry Gets Done

Over the last eight years, the author has been serving as an Associate Director on the North Georgia Conference staff of the United Methodist Church. The North Georgia Conference's boundaries expand into the top half of the state of Georgia. The center of activity geographically is the state capitol, in Atlanta. Since hosting the 1996 Olympics the population exponentially began to increase, particularly in the eighteen counties surrounding the capitol city. Currently there are 7,178, 677 persons residing in the geographical area of the North Georgia Conference.

Located in the southeastern part of the United States, it is one of the fastest growing population areas in the United States. It also has one of the largest African American populations and is one of the fastest growing areas for Hispanic and Latino populations. In addition, North Georgia has one of the largest and busiest airports in the world.

The North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church is the largest Annual Conference in the denomination. The Conference is comprised of 12 districts, 923 local churches, 1086 clergy, 354,094 members of local churches and 138,070 people in worship every week. As of 2008 the North Georgia conference recorded 6,670 confessions of faith and 3,820 young people who have completed confirmation class.

Encompassed within this conference area are seven colleges and universities, two theological schools, two children's homes for displaced children, and one home for persons with disabilities, hospitals, and facilities that provide for the care of the elderly and much more.

Likewise, in the North Georgia Conference are 134 predominately African American congregations, 20 Hispanic mission churches, 12 Korean churches and 6 other various ethnic churches. North Georgia has some of the largest churches in the country, but like the trend in the rest of country, 450 of their 923 worshipping churches have 50 people or less on Sunday morning. It seems that the church is losing it's identity as the place to belong. Yet the North Georgia Conference has a great opportunity to reach more persons for Christ based on the demographic data.

It must be noted that the United Methodist Church has been in decline for the past three decades since it merged with the Evangelical United Brethren and abolished its' all black segregated Central Jurisdiction thirty years ago. Lovett Weems, a researcher and professor at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC believes if the trends in aging and membership losses continue at their current rates, the denomination will shrink to its size at the time of the first Christmas Conference in 1784. The denomination has a future in the United States only if it can reach a younger and more diverse people.

For five years the author has served in the office of Church Development which was created to give more focus to growing and revitalizing the United Methodist Church in North Georgia. She served dual positions as Associate Director in the Office of Church Development and Director of Black Church Development. During that time she worked with pastors and congregations to start new churches and revitalize existing congregations.

After a restructuring at the 2008 North Georgia Annual Conference, the Office of Church Development was refocused and renamed the Office of New Church Development. The author was then appointed to the Office of Connectional Ministries as one of its Associate Directors and church consultants. This office's primary task is to help local congregations live out the mission of the church within the bounds of the North Georgia Conference and beyond.

The office facilitates churches in the continuous process of transformation and renewal. It coordinates the recruitment and training of conference leaders and provides resources to enable churches to accomplish mission and ministry in their communities. The author's portfolio includes but is not limited to congregational development and existing Black Church Development.

The author works with pastors and churches connecting them to resources for doing mission and ministry, facilitating leadership development workshops, church assessments and planning events for clergy and laity. In a very real sense the office she works in helps churches provide a place for persons seeking a place to belong.

Problem Solving Through Facilitating Leadership Development

Since serving on Conference staff, the author has seen three issues that have drawn her attention. These issues in particular relate to clergy which in turn affects their congregational relationships.

The first issue is the scarcity of appointments for African American pastors who are elders needing a full time appointment. In turn, there are not enough churches who can afford the compensation package of a full time elder. Because of the decline in membership and worship attendance in mainline churches, North Georgia is experiencing this phenomenon particularly in African American churches. For the past four years this trend of decline has continued.

The second issue is created by the first issue. Because of the lack of full time appointments for African American pastors, they are being placed in what the United Methodist Church calls cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. This sometimes translates in the North Georgia Conference to an African American pastor being appointed to a predominately European American congregation that is declining and located in a racially transitioning community.

This occurrence is also emerging with pastors of other ethnicities as well for varying reasons. The European American congregation is sometimes in decline because it has failed to reach the transitioning community in which it resides. When a pastor of another ethnicity is appointed to the church they receive little or no preparation for these appointments. With no preparation, pastor and people find themselves in conflict which leads to further decline. There are of course exceptions to this rule but the norm the author believes has been expressed in the comments above.

The third issue is that of leadership development, particularly for clergy who are serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. Because the demographic has changed exponentially over the past thirty years, congregations are finding it difficult to keep up with the changing dynamics. Congregations are in need of clergy leaders that are able to lead them into their next level of faithfulness and effectiveness.

In the North Georgia Annual Conference there is a strong laity movement and several opportunities for laity to be engaged in leadership development. The Annual Conference provides through the Board of Laity such programs as Leadership UMC, the Lay Revitalization Movement, and Lay Missioners School, just to name a few.

Over the past several years the Annual Conference has provided some opportunities for clergy leadership development, but often this is limited to a select few because of space and finances. The issues the author has raised often led some African American pastors to feel they do not have a place to belong. The black church cannot afford them, often the white church does not want them and leadership development opportunities are limited to them.

The North Georgia Conference because of its changing demographics, which effect leadership needs, is beginning to assign more pastors to cross racial appointments. As such, it will be important for them to live into the mandate of the United Methodist Book of Discipline and the directives of the Board of Ordained Ministry Handbook to prepare leaders for service in the church and changing communities. In addition, the Conference needs practices that are congruent with what our church professes to believe. There are wonderful opportunities for mission and ministry offered by the multiracial and

multicultural society present in the United States in general and in the upper half of the state of Georgia in particular.

It will be important to equip culturally competent leaders to serve churches in diverse settings because persons are needed who have an orientation toward understanding cultural and racial differences. The author was excited to learn, while working on this project, that the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church will be sponsoring an event that will bring the local church, the annual conference and the general church together to collaborate on dismantling the relational roadblocks that undermine effective cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments.

The author while serving in her present appointment in the Office of Connectional Ministries was privy to a conversation that raised the need for the Annual Conference to improve the way it selects leaders and supports them in cross racial appointments. It was decided that we would gather a task group to address the concerns. The group included representatives from the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the Office of Connectional Ministries, the Office of New Church Development and several District Superintendents. The persons asked to participate were chosen because of their experience and interest in this area. The author took on the assignment of gathering these persons and establishing some basic tasks to be accomplished. Serendipitously, this was the beginning of the author's project.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

The Christian Church is always in need of effective clergy leaders. There are many books that address leadership development and the necessity of having faithful, transformational, influential pastoral leaders. This ministry project investigates the need for the preparation of leaders in a particular ministry setting. That specific ministry setting is cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments in the United Methodist Church.

The author focuses specifically on clergy leaders, but readily acknowledges that in this case, without the assistance of laity leaders the work of preparing pastors and congregations for cross-racial, cross-cultural ministry cannot happen. Leadership development is a significant subject and many books and scholarly articles abound on this theme. However, the focus for this project will include authors who address leadership development from the view point of becoming a culturally sensitive leader.

The author views the issue of leadership development for clergy as essential as persons are appointed cross-racially and cross-culturally to local churches. Because of unique circumstances these pastors need to be equipped to help their congregations grow and continue to thrive in the midst of change. The author believes that leaders must begin with their own theology of excellence.

Bishop Ken Carder, a retired United Methodist Bishop says in an article, entitled, *What Does God Have To Do With Excellence?*, “Christian ministry clearly lives, and

moves and has its being in a particular God who was incarnate in Jesus Christ. Explicit in the awareness of who God is, what God is doing, and what God calls us to do and be provides the motivation, guidance, and sustaining power for ministry. What does God, a particular God called Trinity have to do with sustaining pastoral excellence? Everything! Excellence begins, continues and ends in God!”¹

Pastors serving in these settings will need to depend on the power of God to sustain them. This ministry can be painful, isolating and feel very desolate at times. It will be vital for pastors to remember that it is God who calls them to this work. Even the pastors, for whom the work goes well, still express the hurt they feel from parishioners and colleagues who offend without knowing. To maintain excellence in leadership one must hold on to the call from God who is our beginning and our end in all places.

The ability to lead in a cross-racial, cross cultural appointment calls for pastors who are culturally aware and sensitive to the experiences of others in their appointed context. Lucia McSpadden says, “Where different ethnic groups interact on a regular, intimate basis, such as in a cross-cultural, cross-racial appointment or congregation, opportunities for both understanding and misunderstanding increase.”² Critical for more understanding to occur requires pastors who are self aware as they seek to expand the awareness of others.

¹ *What Does God Have To Do With Excellence?*, <http://faithandleadership.com/programs/spe/articles/200505/20050427a.html>, (accessed May25, 2010).

² Lucia Ann McSpadden, *Meeting God at the Boundaries: Cross-Cultural-Cross-Racial Clergy Appointments* (Nashville, TN: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church, 2003), 53.

When pastors have a deep sense of call to ministry wherever God sends them they seem to have an uncanny ability to function in complex situations. Again, McSpadden reminds us that, “This kind of spiritual centering and strength form the bedrock for ministry in cross-cultural-cross-racial settings, and for good reason. This calling is demanding and exhilarating, exhausting and enlightening; it pulls people out of their comfort zones.”³ It releases people to see where God is acting.

One of the imperative discussions in making these appointments is to consider the characteristics of a leader who can traverse this complex ground of ministry. Also of importance to a pastoral leader is what value a particular race and culture places on characteristic behaviors of their pastor.

McSpadden gives an example of this when an immigrant pastor was appointed to a Euro-American congregation; they felt the pastor was just not a born leader. The pastor did not lead in a way in which they were accustomed. They had unspoken expectations of how a pastor should lead. These expectations were part of a value system that the congregation was aware of, but the immigrant pastor was unaware of which qualities the congregation felt exemplified a born leader.

McSpadden says, “These qualities represent values that are part of the ‘deep structure’ of Euro-American culture. For many years now, people involved in the field of cross-cultural communication and training have used the image of an iceberg to represent the dynamics of cultures. Only a small part of an iceberg – the ‘tip’ – is visible. Most of

³Ibid., 71.

the iceberg is unseen, submerged under the waterline, creating a potential hazard for nearby ships. Culture functions like an iceberg.”⁴

A culturally sensitive minister must come to understand that how they see and experience the world may not be the same as how their culturally different congregation sees it. When talking with participants in this process the author often heard congregants express the frustration of this occurrence.

The author believes that it will be imperative for pastors to lead their congregations in discovering those unconscious implicitly learned and difficult to change worldviews of those with whom they will be in partnership. These are indications of below the iceberg layers of beliefs that are often invisible to them until someone collides with them. Pastors take their beliefs as the norm and expect everyone else to fall in line with their values.

McSpadden further notes, “To be culturally aware and sensitive, we need to be willing to explore our worldview and our deepest values; we need to become clear about what is ‘under the waterline’. Kind, supportive, open, and non-threatening interaction can help immensely in this learning process.”⁵ This kind of exploration can assist a pastor and congregation in understanding how to communicate with each other, how to navigate power dynamics, and how to handle expectations of the pastoral role.

Another significant area is how pastoral authority is exercised. All of these differ based on the race and culture of the congregation. One way for the pastoral leader to

⁴Ibid., 50.

⁵Ibid., 53.

approach this is how they initially relate to their congregants. For example: One African American pastor of a cross-racial appointment reported that early in the appointment, someone left an anonymous note on his desk which asked if the pastor planned to be autocratic.

John Maxwell's five levels of leadership can help us illustrate the importance of how a particular culture views their leader. The five levels are role, relationships, results, reproduction and respect. For example, if a pastor's own culture says that you respect the pastor because of their leadership position and the pastor is appointed to a church where the culture says you respect the pastor because of the results they produce, then that pastor may have an issue if they are unaware or resistant to this fact.

"These are the type of iceberg events in which two cultural iceberg collide under the waterline. To address conflict, at a minimum level, both pastor and congregation need to bring their values, expectations, and beliefs to the surface. Furthermore, care should be taken to develop avenues for increasing understanding and for gaining the skills of listening and asking questions. The situation must be transparent so that everyone can develop the insights to know better how to pastor, to lead, and to nurture a fulfilling, spiritually enriching relationship between pastor and parishioners."⁶

The pastoral leader must be the kind of leader that will take the initiative to help parishioners begin to understand these cultural icebergs and how to move beyond them. In the author's context she believes it would be useful for pastors to receive some training on how to recognize both barriers to and openings for further dialogue.

⁶Ibid., 69.

McSpadden believes that the Annual Conference should assist in this task. She says, “To assist in this process, it is important to provide opportunities on a conference wide basis for coaching and training laypersons and clergy prior to an appointment. There also needs to be support, structure, and processes for ongoing reflection and problem solving during the early time of the appointments.”⁷

Additionally McSpadden says, “In addition to the direct support for laypersons and clergy, measures like these provide opportunities for district superintendents to gain insights about the skills, worldview, and flexibility of the specific clergy and congregations. Such opportunities can help prevent appointments where the cultural gap is just too wide or where the pastor and/or the people are not open to change.”⁸

The author often heard concerns from pastoral leaders about the lack of support from the District Superintendent. Bishop Ernest S. Lyght in the book *Many Faces One Church: A Manual for Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Ministry* address this concern in a chapter entitled “Living the Hallmarks of Leadership”. In this chapter Bishop Lyght suggests the composition of the cabinet is critical. “In particular, cross-racial and cross-cultural representation is needed on the cabinet to foster fresh insights that offer a comprehensive view of the conference and ministry. Only through such diversity will this team have the knowledge and ability to make the required steps that will yield measurable benefits. After all, diversity enhances creativity and innovation in ministry.”⁹

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ernest S. Lyght, Dharmaraj, Glory E. and Jacob S. Dharmaraj, *Many Faces One Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 51.

The author agrees that the district superintendent is a critical player in function of these appointments. Sometimes parishioners will seek to triangulate the district superintendent when they do not like the behavior and leadership style of the pastor. Bishop Lyght states, “Ensuring that cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments succeed is a joint effort shared by district superintendents and local churches. Every effort must be made to integrate the leadership and ministry, and responses and resources on both sides. This can only be achieved through divine wisdom, human collaboration, and multicultural management skill.”¹⁰

Further Bishop Lyght states, “District superintendents are in the advantageous position of being able to address problems as they arise. They have the administrative authority to intervene and moral capacity to create a healthy, collaborative environment between pastors and congregations.”¹¹

Yet there is more to it than just having the position and capacity to do something with that position. Bishop Lyght says, “District superintendents must be cross-disciplined. Those district superintendents who are untrained and unaware of the dynamics of multicultural management will only exacerbate the problems faced by churches and their minority pastors. District superintendents who truly want to serve as pastors of pastors must expand their hearts and minds to leviathan proportion by coming to appreciate other cultures and races, and develop a love for the global church.”¹²

¹⁰Ibid., 53.

¹¹Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

One of the terms used for pastoral leaders who are sensitive to the changing demographics of our United States society is “culturally competent”. We need pastoral leaders who are culturally competent. Bishop Lyght says, “As we minister among different racial and ethnic populations, we need to enhance our capacity through cultural education. This enhancement needs to include increased sensitivity and awareness and increased cultural knowledge, which translates into changed behaviors and attitudes. Cultural diversity must be valued. There must be a way of doing cultural self-assessment if the level of cultural competence is to be raised.”¹³

Like Bishop Lyght, the author believes that seminaries and Annual Conferences must have an active role in preparing pastors to be cross-culturally competent. In addition Bishop Lyght says, “The individual pastor must also assume responsibility for becoming cross-culturally competent. A part of this task is to gain an understanding of and an appreciation for the many cultures in our world, our nation, and our neighborhoods.”¹⁴

Becoming culturally competent requires particular practices for effective ministry. One of those practices is spiritual leadership. It is the belief of this author that if a pastor is going to be effective in a cross-racial, cross-cultural setting they should be seen as a spiritual leader in their setting. Gary A. Parrett, co-author of the book *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation*, gives an insight on how pastoral leaders can impact their settings by focusing on a vision of who the culturally sensitive minister can be.

¹³ Ibid., 9.

¹⁴ Ibid.

In the chapter entitled “Becoming a Culturally Sensitive Minister”, Parrett pursues a model of incarnational ministry as a way for pastors to become sensitive culturally. Describing this chapter he says, “Rather than looking at how to teach in ways that are culturally sensitive, this chapter focuses on a vision of who the culturally sensitive minister – servant, friend, teacher – can be. The word ‘becoming’ in the chapter’s title suggest that cultural sensitivity requires ongoing growth and development. The model pursued here is that of an incarnational ministry, an approach patterned after the greatest cross cultural minister who ever lived – the Lord Jesus Christ. The vision of an incarnational ministry is surely not original, but hopefully the particular approach to this vision will offer some fresh insights.”¹⁵

Parrett examines two texts, John 13:3-17 and Philippians 2:5-11. He believes that if pastors are going to step out of their comfort zones they must have a foundational security in God. They must know who they are in God. For example, Jesus was able to step out of his role as leader and teacher of the disciples and take on the role of servant as he washed the disciple’s feet.

At the Last Supper, he was willing to take off his outer garments and serve the disciples because he knew what God sent him to do. He did not lose his identity by performing this foot washing act. Pastoral leaders in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments may too have to step out of their own cultural comfort zones in obedience to God and in sacrificial love for others. Pastoral leaders also must be willing to empty themselves in order to engage another culture. This is a kind of self emptying without

¹⁵ Elizabeth Conde Frazier, S. Steve King and Gary A. Parrett, *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamic for Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004), 122.

losing one's own identity. The scripture says Jesus did this when he came to earth in human form. Parrett believes that the Philippians 2:5-11 text is an example of the willingness of Christ to let go for our sakes. Pastoral leaders, in order to be free to begin loving others who may be different from themselves will be able to do this if they are secure in God's love for them.

Parrett states, "Secure in the Father's love for us, we are now free to begin loving others who may be, in certain respects, very different from us. To love within a cultural context other than our own, we will likely need to let go of some things that have always been precious to us. For Christ to become incarnate as a human, he had to 'empty himself', Paul tells us."¹⁶ In this emptying one does not lose themselves but expands one's self to understand the culture of another. This can help the congregation experience the same type of emptying.

One example of this is when an Asian pastor served a predominately white church and the parishioners complained about her heavy accent. Her reaction was to not be offended and to also provide transcripts with her sermons. Eventually, some members were able to acknowledge that her accent was different, but that it made them be more attentive and focus on what was being preached.

In this way, both expanded their understanding of each other. They each were willing to compromise on their views of how they felt the other should function in the church. The author believes that pastoral leaders should use incidences as these as

¹⁶Ibid., 126.

teachable moments for the congregation. It can be a way of starting a dialogue about cultural differences.

Another approach to dialogue about cultural difference is through exploring cultural diversity in worship. Trying different styles of worship can give parishioners an opportunity to experience another way of doing worship. Often congregations feel that there is one way to conduct worship, their way. This is one of the biggest issues not only in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments, but in many churches today. The pastoral leader must understand how changing worship can lead to great disagreements and discern how to lead their congregations through any conflict that might take place.

At the center of many discussions about change in churches today is the topic of worship. Describing the Pentecost text in the book of Acts, C. Michael Hawn in his book, *One Bread, One Body: Exploring Cultural Diversity in Worship* says, “The idea of a culturally diverse worshipping community still compels. Our discomfort and unease with those who are different from us may reflect, like the frightened disciples huddled together, the locked doors and bolted windows of our lives.”¹⁷

Hawn concludes with these statements. “In a world where ethnic stereotyping is on the rise, the refuge of gated communities is increasingly sought, and the balkanizing of nations is becoming commonplace, the church must claim the power of the Spirit to upend the structures of division and evil. The same Spirit that brought comprehension

¹⁷ C. Michael Hawn, *One Bread, One Body: Exploring Cultural Diversity in Worship* (The Alban Institute, 2003), 175.

and community out of the chaos at the birth of the church is able to unite us in our cultural differences when we worship as ‘one body’ sharing ‘one bread’.”¹⁸

The author concludes through the review of the authors examined that it is imperative for pastoral leaders and the congregations that they serve are open to embrace those who are different. Embracing others is an opportunity to show God’s love for all people. Pastoral leaders serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments can be catalysts for others to learn about, celebrate, and embrace diversity.

¹⁸Ibid., 176.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Historical Foundation

The United Methodist Church claims as part of its mission and ministry the inclusive nature of the church. Paragraph four of the United Methodist Book of Discipline states, “The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection.”¹

Pastoral leaders must take this claim to heart and be willing to live into all it means to be inclusive church. They must teach others concerning the principles of the church and help their congregations practice receiving all persons without regard to their race or culture. The Book of Discipline further states, “The mark of an inclusive society is one in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supporting of all

¹*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2008), 22.

other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community, and the world.”²

Inherent in the cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments is often an issue of racism. Many times this is experienced but never discussed in the congregation. Pastoral leaders in the United Methodist Church again have the opportunity to share what the Book of Discipline says about this matter. “The United Methodist Church recognizes that the sin of racism has been destructive to its unity throughout its history. Racism continues to cause painful division and marginalization.”³

The pastoral leader will often experience some form of racism when appointed cross-racially or cross-culturally. If pastors are not grounded in the history of the congregation and aware of their annual conference culture then it will be easy for them to feel that they are not accepted. They will not experience the United Methodist Church’s motto, “Open hearts, Open minds, Open doors”.

The author discovered theologians and practitioners who speak to issues of belonging and understanding the call to belong to God. Often this is lived out in answering a call to serve God and God’s people. As clergy live out their call, they need to develop a theology of vocation and what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Having pastors gather in places where they have a sense of belonging allows them to discuss with colleagues what it means to be a disciple and how one lives that out.

Being a United Methodist clergy person, the author has experienced the greatest example of this in the life and works of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. John

²Ibid., 93.

³Ibid., 22.

Wesley's spiritual quest started when he and his brother Charles and others established the Holy Club while they were students at Oxford. "The Holy Club, the name given to John and Charles Wesley's group by their fellow collegians in mockery of their emphasis on devotions, was the first sign of what later became Methodism. Begun by Charles and led by John after his return to Oxford University in 1729, the Holy Club members fasted until three in the afternoon on Wednesdays and Fridays, received Holy Communion once each week, studied and discussed the Greek New Testament and the Classics each evening in a member's room, visited prisoners and the sick, and systematically brought all their lives under strict review."⁴

The ministry of John and Charles Wesley has birthed various Methodist movements across the world. "The United Methodist Church shares a common history and heritage with other Methodist and Wesleyan bodies. The lives and ministries of John Wesley and of his brother, Charles, mark the origin of their common roots. Both John and Charles were Church of England missionaries to the colony of Georgia arriving in March 1736."⁵

The Methodist movement in America which began as a lay movement experienced many twists and turns. The movement was affected by the various changes in American society such as the American Revolution, The Second Great Awakening, the Sunday School Movement in American, the Slavery Question, the Civil War, Reconstruction and the World Wars. The church went through separations, mergers, and more splits and mergers until it came to be known as the United Methodist Church in

⁴*The Holy Club*: <http://ctlibrary.com/ch1983/issue2/216.htm>; (accessed July 25, 2010).

⁵ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2008), 9.

1968. At various junctures of the Methodist movement, important matters were addressed. Some of issues were war, race, growth of the movement, organization of the Methodist societies, laity representation, the role of women in the church, theological developments and controversies and mission at home and abroad.

Throughout the movement ministries among various ethnic groups were instituted. “Mission work, both home and overseas, was high on the agendas of the churches. Home mission programs sought to Christianize the city as well as the Native Americans. Missionaries established schools for former slaves and their children. Missions overseas were effective in Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America. Significant ministries in America were instituted, especially among Chinese and Japanese immigrants.”⁶

When the various church entities became the United Methodist church, the Methodist Episcopal Church had a jurisdiction that was based on race, called the Central Jurisdiction. It meant that while the rest of the churches in the Methodist Church were divided in to geographical segments, the Central Jurisdiction was based on race no matter where the churches were geographically located. This was a segregated jurisdiction for blacks. When the uniting churches were moving toward merger between 1940 – 1967 one of the matters of importance was the issue of racism.

“Many Methodist were especially disturbed by the manner in which racial segregation was built into the fabric of their denominational structure. The Central Jurisdiction was a constant reminder of racial discrimination. Proposals to eliminate the Central Jurisdiction were introduced at the General Conferences from 1959 to 1966. Finally, plans to abolish the Central Jurisdiction were agreed upon with the contemplated

⁶Ibid., 15, 16.

union with the Evangelical United Brethren in 1968, although a few African American annual conferences continued for a short time after.”⁷

It is interesting to note that the historical position of Methodist Church in Georgia where the author serves as a clergy person in the North Georgia conference has a very diverse history. “Georgia became one of the most diverse of the English colonies. By the time the Wesley’s arrived in Georgia, three years after the first settlers, Georgia was already a rather cosmopolitan place. There were two groups of German-speaking pietists there, the Moravians and the Salzburger. The town of Savannah included Spanish-speaking Jewish people, and Wesley began learning Spanish in order to converse with what he called his ‘Jewish parishioners’.....In trying to minister to all the people in Savannah, at various times Wesley conducted worship services or read prayers in at least four languages: English, French, Italian and German.”⁸

“From Methodism’s beginnings in America, Methodists assumed that the gospel was for everyone, regardless of race or social or economic status. So the Methodist considered it both their privilege and their responsibility to proclaim the gospel everywhere and to everyone.”⁹ Methodism’s message of the free grace of God to all who would accept it was very appealing.

Yet as the church grew, the issue of race became a struggle. “Over a too-long period of time, The United Methodist Church and its predecessor bodies struggled with what it means to love one another without regard to race, color, ethnicity or national

⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁸ Sheets, Herchel H., *Methodist in North Georgia: A History of the North Georgia Conference* (Milledgeville, GA, 2005), 11.

⁹ Ibid., 211.

origin. One aspect of that struggle related to the role and status of persons of African heritage within the denomination. Persons of African heritage were among the earliest respondents to the vibrant message of salvation offered by the followers of John Wesley.”¹⁰

At the same time of the merger in 1968 the United Methodist church created what is now called the General Commission on Religion and Race to ensure that The United Methodist Church was a church where all persons would be eligible to attend its worship services, to participate in its programs and, when they take the appropriate vows, to be admitted into its membership. The Commission continues its work today. One of the issues it now addresses is how the appointment of pastors to cross-racial, cross-cultural settings is impacting both pastors and congregations. The authors own Annual Conference is now making an intentional effort to discover how the annual conference might be a resource and support for local congregations and pastors.

Somehow across the country we lost sight of the vision of local churches being open to persons, both clergy and laity different from them. But this is beginning to change because our country is growing more diverse and our communities are rapidly changing. Local churches will no longer have the luxury of being homogeneous. Many will soon have to make the choice to die or grow more diverse. We have a rich heritage and history upon which to draw as we journey toward an inclusive church that celebrates, welcomes and invites all persons to experience the love of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

¹⁰ Thompson, Barbara Ricks, editor, *The Central Jurisdiction Recovery Project* (Washington, DC: General Commission on Religion and Race, 2006), 1.

Biblical Foundation

As conferences prepare pastoral leaders to serve in cross-racial, cross-cultural opportunities, they will need biblical grounding. There are two ways the author would like to view biblical foundations. The first way is through looking at texts that speak to the inclusive nature of the church. These texts speak to the inclusive message of the bible as God calls all nations to be in relationship with the one God.

David Anderson in his book *Multicultural Ministry* contends that churches should intentionally reach out to those of other cultures. He reminds us that the church in the United States has a tendency to be very insular. He suggests what he calls multicultural evangelism, reaching out to someone from a racial or cultural background different from your own.

He believes that there are several texts in the New Testament that show an inextricable link between evangelism and multicultural ministry. One text is Matthew 28: 19-20 which says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”¹¹

“The phrase ‘make disciples’ satisfied the question of what Jesus followers were commissioned to do. But the phrase ‘of all nations’ specified the extensive target that Jesus had in mind. The Greek term here translated as ‘nation’ is *ethnos*. In other words, Jesus was commanding his followers to make disciples of people from all ethnic

¹¹ *Life Application Bible, New Revised Standard Version* (Iowa Falls, Iowa: World Bible Publishers, Incorporated, 1989), 1674.

backgrounds. For the disciples to obey the Great Commission, they had to face the inevitability of cross-cultural, multiethnic ministry.”¹²

Another text that speaks to the inclusive nature of the church is Acts 2: 5-11. This passage reminds us that the Holy Spirit was available to all nations. It says,

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, ‘Are not all these speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.’¹³

The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary reminds us that God’s Spirit is delivered not in some indistinguishable perfect or heavenly language but with words that had the marks of human identity; it was the language of particular human groups, spoken in their idiom. God works in collaboration with real people – people who are filled with the Spirit to work on God’s behalf in their own world.¹⁴ In practice and preaching pastoral leaders can remind congregations that everyone does not have to be uniform, and that God can help us celebrate our diversity while still practicing unity. We get to see God’s creative process at work when we celebrate that God’s Spirit was poured out on all on the day of Pentecost.

¹² David Anderson, *Multicultural Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2004), 138.

¹³ *Life Application Bible*, 1887-1888.

¹⁴ The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes; Volume 10 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 58.

The other way the author views the biblical foundation is through the lens of texts that speak to having a place to belong and fellow companions with which to share the journey. For instance, one of the ways that the author learned that pastoral leaders navigate their way in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments is through participation in support or covenant groups. These places give pastoral leaders a place to belong as they face the challenges of living into a new way of being.

Throughout the biblical text, both in the Old and the New Testaments, the idea of finding a place to belong appears as a theme. Also, the biblical text is replete with examples of the inclusive nature of the church. In the biblical text, the Israelites are often portrayed as a nomadic and displaced people. Those who were prophets and proclaimed the word of God were sometimes isolated and felt alone.

One example of this is in 1 Kings 19 when Elijah had a battle with the priest of Baal and won. He had to flee for his life because Queen Jezebel had vowed to kill him. He found himself in the desert in a depressed state. He felt he was all alone and complained to God that only he remained as one faithful to God. He told God that he wanted to die.

One of the ways in the Old Testament that prophets/preachers found a place to belong was through prophetic guilds. Not all prophets were acting in solitary ways. Much of the material that the author found about these prophetic guilds was geared around how their prophetic agency was carried out in the places where they lived. The author and the readings suggest that inherent in the life of these guilds were a sense of belonging where prophets were nurtured and supported. "Old Testament prophecy cannot be fully understood apart from some appreciation of the prophetic guilds as being frequently

organized round some central figure who served as both spiritual mentor to his followers and as arbiter of custom and discipline”.¹⁵

“A number of times groups of prophets who prophesy together is mentioned. The group in 1 Samuel 19:20 has Samuel as their leader and Elijah and Elisha were also associated with groups (2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 5:22 and especially 6:1ff). The reference in 2 Kings 6:1 to a building where the sons of prophets sat or lived *before* Elisha may suggest that these groups received some form of training or at least spiritual leadership from such figures. The stories in I Kings 20 and 22 suggest these guilds of prophets were consulted for or offered God’s opinions on public events.”¹⁶

When Annual Conferences are preparing pastors to serve in cross-racial, cross cultural appointments, it would be advisable for them to create the opportunity for pastors to meet with their peers around the concerns and celebration they encounter. Having other people who have some sense of what is experienced can be encouraging for the journey. It also is an opportunity for colleagues to sharpen each other’s ministry skills.

Another Old Testament text that speaks to the process of learning in support groups is Proverbs 27:17 which says, “Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another”. The idea is that people grow from interaction with each other. “There is a mental sharpness that comes from being around good people. And a meeting of minds can help people see their ideas with new clarity, refine them, and shape them into brilliant insights. This requires discussion partners who can challenge each other and stimulate thought.”¹⁷

¹⁵James D. Newsome, *The Hebrew Prophets* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1984), 61.

¹⁶*Prophets*, <http://bible.gen.nz/amos/prophets.htm>, (accessed July 25, 2010).

In the New Testament we see the model of Jesus shaping and forming his disciples who are in a small group of twelve. At times there were others present, but often Jesus takes the twelve aside for special learning. This happens in all four of the gospel texts. Jesus was their coach in this kingdom building venture. The following texts speak of Jesus' call to his disciples to follow him, Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20 and 3:13-19, Luke 6:12-16 and John 1:35-51. He calls them to drop their occupations for a vocation with him.

Luke Timothy Johnson in the book *Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Luke* in chapter three, "Preparing a Leadership for the People" exegetes Luke 9:1-17 and discusses how Jesus prepares the disciples to lead the people. He intimates that before Jesus begins his journey to Jerusalem and his death, he begins to prepare a new leadership for the restored Israel.¹⁸ Annual Conferences must begin to prepare a new leadership for a changing demographic. Just as Jesus prepared the disciples, Annual Conferences must prepare a new generation of leaders to be ready for a multicultural experience that has emerged in the United States

Another New Testament text that speaks to finding a place to belong and being nurtured and challenged to grow is Act 2:37-47. This text conveys the idea of taking care of one another and working together to meet the needs of all in that particular community of faith. Verse 45-47 says, "Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple;

¹⁷The Life Application Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, Inc.), 1088.

¹⁸Luke Timothy Johnson, *Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 148.

they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people”.

Again, Luke Timothy Johnson, in another volume of work, illustrates that the writer of Luke’s historical narrative serves a definite religious intent. In his interpretation on Acts 2:37-47, Johnson discusses the portrait of the first community of believers as being intense in their unity and joy. “By using this typos, Luke communicated to his readers in vivid fashion that the gift of the Spirit brought about a community which realized the highest aspirations of human longing: unity, peace, joy and the praise of God.”¹⁹

In the commentary, *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, Clarice Martin says that Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-35 are a divine invitation for the church to restructure itself as the new community. She says it is the key to its prophetic witness and its pastoral impact. These texts allow contemporary believers to look at the dimensions of life in human communities from a spiritual, social, economic and moral perspective.²⁰

Theological Foundation

Eric Law is a theologian and practitioner of developing leadership in multicultural communities. In his book, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, he begins a dialogue and theological reflection on what it means, spiritually and practically, to be a leader in a multicultural community. He approaches this reflection by discussing how culture shapes the way we interact with others. Often times our cultural make up hinders us from forming relationships with others different from us. When Law refers to culture, he

¹⁹Luke Timothy Johnson, *Sacra Pagina: The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 62.

²⁰Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Editor, *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary* (New York, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998), 763.

means ethnic culture – “the values, beliefs, arts, food, customs, clothing, family and social organizations, and government of a given people in a given time. It is a known fact that ethnic cultures differ from each other to varying degrees.”²¹

Law says that often we only pay attention to that part of culture that we see, an external culture, like music, dance, food and art, etc. Yet the major part of culture is the internal part. Law says, “External culture is the conscious part of culture. It is the part that we can see, taste and hear. It consists of acknowledged beliefs and values. It is explicitly learned and can be easily changed. However, this constitutes only a small part of our culture. The major part is the internal part, which consists of the unconscious beliefs, thought patterns, values, and myths that affect everything we do and see.”²²

Law believes that it will take a life time to uncover our own internal culture which he likens to an iceberg. He believes in order for persons to engage in an intercultural dialogue and community they must be willing to look at one’s self and be open to encounter and connect with someone of a different culture than their own. This understanding of relating and learning to value others is what pastors and congregations serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings need to embrace.

Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer speaks to the issues that pastors and people have to wrestle with in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*. He explores the relationship between us and the teachings of Jesus. He shows the dichotomy between what he calls cheap grace and costly grace. His life was a sterling example of sacrifice and consistency that represented a new type of leadership inspired by the Gospel.

²¹ Eric F. H. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993), 4.

²² Ibid., 4-5.

The type of leadership that Dietrich Bonhoeffer engendered is characteristic of the type of leader that would do well in a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment. It is a leader that is compelled by the life and ministry of Jesus. A person who is willing to put aside some of their cultural norms and reach across barriers to be in ministry with those who do not look and talk like them. An example of this is the woman at the well and the woman who pleaded with Jesus to heal her daughter. Both women were willing to cross boundaries that the tradition of their day said they should not.

This raises the need for pastoral leaders to review their understanding of the doctrine of the church. There is the need to be reminded that “the disciplines of practical theology deal with the practice of the church and its members. The basis of these disciplines is the doctrine of the church, that is, the interpretation of the nature and purpose of the church, what church and its members are called to be and do.”²³

As we consider cross-racial, cross cultural appointments, we consider the image of the church as the body of Christ. In the book, *Introduction to Theology* Owen Thomas says. “Jesus did not leave behind a creed, code of ethics, or a set of cultic instructions but a community of people who he had called taught and with whom he had shared his life and Spirit. Jesus’ purpose in calling this community together was that its members would represent him in preaching and healing.”²⁴

Pastoral leaders in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings must lead their congregations in the practices of healing. Charles Foster in his book *Embracing Diversity* speaks of a term that he encountered in an essay called “theology of embrace”. It was

²³Owen C. Thomas and Elle K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 257.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 258.

used by Miroslav Volf to describe a framework for mediating the conflicts among ethnic and religious groups in the geographic area in southeastern Europe called the Balkans. Foster describes what Volf observed: “He observed that the act of embracing always involves two movements on the part of two people or groups – a movement to ‘create space in myself for the other’ and an enclosing movement to communicate that I do not want to be without the other in her or his otherness.”²⁵

Foster in his book refers to these “practices of embrace” as the movement of different people in community who reach out to others without losing their own identity. “To embrace others suggest that we cannot ‘live authentically without welcoming others – the other gender, other persons, or other cultures’ – into the very structure of our being.”²⁶

Peter Block in his book, *Community: Structure of Belonging*, offers the notion of leadership as convening. He talks about the fabric of community, the alchemy of belonging and seeing the small group as the unit of transformation. Block says, “Community offers the promise of belonging and calls for us to acknowledge our interdependence. To belong is to act as an investor, owner, and creator of this place. It is to be welcoming, even if we are strangers. As if we came to the right place and are affirmed for that choice. To feel a sense of belonging is important because it will lead us from conversations about safety and comfort to other conversations, such as our relatedness and willingness to provide hospitality and generosity.”²⁷

²⁵Charles R. Foster, *Embracing Diversity* (Alban Institute, Inc., 1997), 1.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2008), 3.

This idea addresses how those in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings can relate to people who come to their church who are from a different race or culture. Congregants do not have to be threatened, but welcome those who are different with generous and inviting hearts. It is about how a church can be transformed from being exclusive to inclusive.

Eric Law in his book, *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace*, calls this movement toward inclusion, the grace margin. It is based on the inclusive nature and acts of Jesus. It is the place between our safety zone and our fear zone. “Christ invites us to step outside our safe zone and enter the grace margin through his actions, stories, parables, or through his redirecting of the questions people asked him. Sometime Christ’s invitation to enter the grace margin can be gentle and compassionate; sometimes the invitation can be confusion, if not shocking. But the grace margin keeps us from moving into the fear zone too quickly and making judgments without considering any other perspectives.”²⁸

As a United Methodist clergy person, the author is reminded of the primacy of grace in the theology of United Methodist. When we ask local churches and pastors to consider the ministry of cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments we are calling them to practice a theology of grace.

²⁸Eric H. F. Law, *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000), 43.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures of the research used to understand the need to have a system of support and resourcing for pastors assigned to serve in cross-racial, cross cultural appointments. The methodology the researcher will use for the project is a qualitative approach. The researcher will be employed as the key instrument for data collection. She will gather multiple forms of data from a focus group, support group, one person interviews, testimonials and researcher observation. She will establish themes and categories that emerge in the research. As she enters the research field and starts to collect data she must be attentive to whether she will need to refocus and expand her initial idea for the project and or consider a name change for the project.

The information gathered is to be used to design a model for Annual Conferences to discover an indigenous approach for supporting and resourcing pastors serving in cross-racial, cross cultural appointments. She also will focus on learning what the participants have to say about how to address the issue of preparing pastors for serving cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments in this particular Annual Conference.

A long standing concern related to preparing pastors for cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments surfaced again in a meeting of the Bishop and the District Superintendents and Conference Directors (also known as the Extended Cabinet). One of the District Superintendents directed the concern by email to the Office of Connectional

Ministries where the author serves as an Associate Director. The concern was then directed to the author specifically and the project was birthed from this correspondence. The researcher wrote a narrative for the Director of the Office of Connectional Ministries to share with the extended Cabinet in response to the concern. She was informed by the director that this was something the Extended Cabinet wanted our office to address. She called together a task group to focus on addressing several issues related to cross-racial, cross cultural appointments.

The author sent an email to the task group to inform them that they would be addressing three items. The first would be to gather pastors who are currently serving or who previously served in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments for a focus group conversation. The exchange would be to gather information and suggestions that would be informative for the Bishop, District Superintendents, pastors and congregations. Prior to the gathering the author would send out questions for the participants to reflect on that would inform and guide the conversation on the day of the focus group gathering.

The second desired accomplishment would be to establish a support or covenant group for pastors so that they would have a place to share and hear each other's stories, reflect on best practices and brainstorm ideas for ministry. The third would be to design and set up a training opportunity for pastors currently serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. The task group make up would include the author, pastors, the Board of Ordained Ministry Chairperson, District Superintendents, and Annual Conference staff that serve the Latino, Asian, and Multi-Ethnic constituency. The task group would meet and agree to take on various tasks. They would also determine

additional persons that would need to be added to the task group as they discovered what other concerns needed to be addressed.

In the first meeting, the task group will share their own stories and experiences with cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments as they discern the need for their work. As she conducts research about the issues that need to be addressed the author will be reminded that she sees the project as a result of the synergy from her spiritual autobiography and her context. Her gathering the task group will be the initiating of her project. The author will first propose to seek out data from participants in a focus group format. She will invite participants who have previously served and are currently serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. The author will send questions to participants for them to think about to generate conversation during the focus group.

The focus group will meet at the United Methodist Center in Norcross. The group will meet for two to three hours. The author will contact the participants, the majority of whom she has known through her work in the Annual Conference and because she has served twenty six years in the Annual Conference.

The author will open up the session with a prayer and greeting and welcome participants for their time together. There will be an overview given by a pastor who is serving in a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment who is also a task group member; this will set the tone for the day. They will sit at round tables in conversation groups to respond to five questions. The participants will report their answers to the larger group.

The responses will be collected and used in the analysis of the data in order to understand how to address the concern of preparing pastors for cross-racial, cross-cultural

appointments. The participants will be asked if they would like to meet again as a covenant or support group for each other.

If they decide to form a support group, the first support group meeting will be to gain an understanding of what will be helpful for pastors as they meet together. The second group meeting will address the issues that the pastors have identified. The third group meeting will include what has happened in the first two meetings, including time to share their personal stories, collegial learning and reflecting on their ministry in their particular cross-racial, cross cultural setting. This third meeting will also include a discussion about a training component for pastors serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments.

The author will also conduct personal interviews with various persons concerning preparing pastors for serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments in this Annual Conference. The author will also seek out information from other annual conferences about what they are doing to support and resource pastors and churches in these appointments. The author will also use researcher observation as she participates and observes in the task group, focus group and support group.

The author will consult two seminal texts currently recommended by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church for pastors being appointed to cross-racial, cross cultural appointments. Those texts are *Meeting God at the Boundaries: Cross-Cultural-Cross Racial Appointments* written by Lucia Ann McSpadden and *Many Faces One Church: A Manual for Cross-Racial and Cross Cultural Ministry* written by Ernest S. Lyght, Glory E. Dharmaraj and Jacob S. Dharmaraj. It should be noted that often one or both of these books are either given to or

recommended to the pastor before or shortly after they begin their cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment.

Another helpful resource is that the author is a certified coach in a movement and process called Natural Church Development and a trained coach for New Church Start pastors. Also, having served in the Office of New Church Development, equips the author to explore a process that was used in that office to assess and to train pastors. This process is a weeklong basic training course for pastors starting new churches. When pastors attend, they come and learn from experts and colleagues what is effective in starting new churches. The author believes a similar basic course could be developed for pastors preparing to serve in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. The author will use knowledge of these processes as a training component is being designed for pastors and congregations.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The Beginning

Historically in the North Georgia Conference clergy appointments have primarily been limited by a pastor's ethnic and racial identities. There have been some exceptions to the norm but the number has not been great. In the last few years we have seen more cross-racial, cross cultural appointments. Several reasons for this exist. One of the reasons is because of the loss of what the United Methodist Church calls full time appointments in the Black Church. This creates a need to place Black Clergy who are elders into churches that can support their salary, pension and insurance.

The churches where these Black elders are placed are usually in white churches, in transitioning communities with declining membership. Another reason for more of these appointments is churches wanting to reach out to their changing community and to bring a person on staff of another racial or cultural background to meet the needs of that community. And yet another reason is the Bishop and Cabinet decides to live out our disciplinary directive that says we are an inclusive church; this pastor may be the best fit for this particular church, regardless of their racial or cultural identity.

What the Annual Conference has learned over the past several years is that there are expressed difficulties in some of these appointments because there is no

intentional preparation of pastors or congregations for this change. There are issues of power and control, worship and preaching style, and evangelism to the surrounding community that can cause frustration for both pastor and people. These issues cannot be addressed by one action or quickly fixed.

Frequently we seek to address the issue of cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments with only procedural solutions, such as reading a book, receiving training or taking a course. These are important, because they help create sustainable processes that will prepare and resource pastors and congregation. Yet, we fail to examine other avenues to improve how we can make these transitions smoother. However the greater issue to be addressed is really an adaptive issue through discerning whether churches and pastors have the desire and capacity to be effective in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings.

This involves speaking truth to both pastors and congregations. Additionally, it is essential to see cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments as a part of our missional task as the people of God. This will necessitate a change of culture in our Annual Conference.

Focus Group Process

This project began by the author calling participants to ascertain whether they would be interested in participating in a focus group concerning cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. The call was followed up by an electronic mail invitation to a group of pastors who were currently serving or who had previously

served in appointments that were considered cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments.

The electronic mail stated that the author wanted to hear from them about their experiences and that their experiences would be helpful to the Cabinet and to congregations and pastors who would serve in the same type of appointment. They were given four questions to think about to guide the conversation on the day of focus group. The author also shared with them that the conversation was part of the work of a task group working to address several issues related to cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments.

The electronic mail also reminded them of the United Methodist 2008 General Conference legislation that passed regarding cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. The new legislation emphasized the Church's commitment to open itinerancy and inclusiveness and provided a definition of cross-racial, cross cultural appointments. The author shared with them that the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry has resources to assist annual conferences, pastors and churches with preparation and training.

The focus group met in the year 2010 at the United Methodist Center building which is on the grounds of the Conference owned Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center in Norcross, Georgia. The building is where we have many of our conference meetings, conferences and retreat, so the participants were very familiar with this location. The group met for approximately two and half hours in the meeting room called the Atrium. The room was set up with round tables. There were four groups and a total of twenty

three participants including the author. The author's role as participant was more of an observer as she visited each table during the focus group discussion time.

The meeting was opened with prayer and immediately following the prayer, the author gave greetings and reminded the participants again why they were invited to participate. The next item on the agenda was that one of the participants gave a brief purpose for the day and recounted his story and set the tone for the time together. There was a lot of energy in the room before, during and after the focus group. The participants seemed eager to participate in the process and shared their ideas and suggestions.

The participants were then asked to complete two tasks at their tables. They were first asked to share their personal stories with each other. They were asked to share their expectations, concerns and celebrations as they serve or served in their cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. The second task was to answer six questions as a group.

- How do pastors need to prepare for serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments?
- How do congregations need to prepare for a pastor of a different racial or cultural background?
- Do you think pastors should be assessed before serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments?
- What have you learned that you feel will help others as they serve in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings?
- What role should the judicatory (Annual Conference, Bishop and Cabinet) play in supporting and resourcing pastors and congregations in these settings?
- How can we care for one another as we serve in these appointments?

After each group finished their responses, the author led them in sharing their answers and recording each group's answers on a white board. The group then reviewed the answers to see which ones were similar and decided how to record the answers. The author then invited the participants to share any closing thoughts. Many said that they enjoyed the time and appreciated the opportunity and space to share their stories and their suggestions. One person said that it was the most productive meeting she had attended in the Annual Conference.

The author asked the group if they wanted to continue to meet as a support group. Some of the participants said yes and the author agreed to contact them at a later date. The table groups were asked to leave their notes with the author so that she could transcribe them and share them later with the group. The time was closed with prayer and the participants were dismissed. After the focus group, the author typed up the responses recorded from the whole group discussion and the notes from each table's discussion.

Support Group Process

As a result of the focus group, the author called together three of the pastors that were newly appointed to cross-racial, cross-cultural settings for a time of fellowship at a restaurant in Lithonia, Georgia. One pastor traveled two hours to be a part of the group. They spent time talking about what was happening in their setting, celebrations and what issues were emerging. The three pastors are African Americans serving predominately white congregations.

They discussed what would be helpful for them as they met in a support group. They said that they would like to meet regularly with other pastors. In this

support group they would like to hear what is happening with their peers. They also would like for pastors who have been serving in a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment for a longer period of time to share practical suggestions for doing ministry in these settings. At the end of our time together, we selected a date to meet again and the author was tasked with inviting other pastors to be a part of the support group.

The second meeting of the support group was held at Lithonia First United Methodist Church in Lithonia, Georgia. The group met from nine until twelve noon in the fellowship hall of the church. The pastor of the church provided breakfast for the participants. There were thirteen persons present. The time together started with an opening prayer and greetings from the author. The group divided into two and three person groups to share in table prayers.

During this time they listened to each other share personal and family prayer concerns. The group came back together and the author introduced the presenter for the day. The presenter was an African American pastor serving in a white congregation in a non-transitional community. He shared his experiences, his approach to being in that new setting, his attitude, their worship tradition and how long it took him to become the pastor and not just the person appointed there.

After the presenter finished, there was a time of questions and answers which led to more discussion. One of the issues raised was whether a pastor should seek to lead the congregation in becoming multi-racial and multi-cultural or if they should try and lead the church to be mono-racial and mono-cultural. The time ended with deciding on the next time and place to meet and a closing prayer.

During this session the author was a participant observer and transcribed notes as part of her data collection. Again she noticed that participants were very engaged and expressed some strong feelings about the issue of preparing pastors and congregations for cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments.

The third support group meeting was held at Zoar United Methodist Church in Snellville, Georgia. The associate pastor of this church is a Black Caribbean pastor serving in a predominately white church as an associate pastor. The meeting was started with a prayer and greeting from the author, we then coupled up with another person and shared table prayers. We came back together and sat around one round table. There were seven participants present.

The discussion for this day was what a training opportunity might look like and how we would proceed with developing the plans. The group suggested it would like to have a Multi-Cultural Conference and invite pastors and churches to receive training. The objective of the conference would be two fold.

The first objective would be to discern ways for pastors and churches to be more faithful and effective in doing cross-racial, cross-cultural ministry in the local church context. The second objective would be to create a space for cross-racial, cross-cultural dialogue. The tentative date for the conference was set for May 2011. We ended the meeting with prayer. The author said that she would be in touch about the next meeting time and for further meetings to plan the conference.

Interview Process

The author conducted unstructured open-ended interviews and took notes. The author interviewed nine persons who have an interest in seeing pastors and congregations prepared as they serve in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings. Six of the interviews were conducted in person. Of those six, one was conducted in the author's office, two in the offices of the persons interviewed and three in a restaurant. The other three were conducted by telephone. All interviews were conducted in Metropolitan Atlanta. The persons interviewed were asked the following questions.

- How do pastors need to prepare for serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments and what are some characteristics of a pastor for this work?
- How do congregations need to prepare for serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments?
- Do you think pastors should be assessed before serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments and how?
- What role should the judicatory (Annual Conference, Bishop, and Cabinet) play in supporting and resourcing pastors and congregations in these settings?
- What should I have asked you?

All of the participant shared openly and were very interested in the subject matter. The participants interviewed were three pastors, the Director of the Ministerial Services Office, two District Superintendents, a Seminary Professor and two Bishops of the United Methodist Church. They each saw the need for this project for Annual Conferences as a means of preparing pastors and

congregations and for our Annual Conference in particular because we have no intentional process in place at this time.

Other Data Collection

The author received electronic mail from two colleagues in other Annual Conferences sharing with her what they do to prepare pastors and congregations. They both expressed a need for more resources to support pastors and churches. The author also asked the Assistant to the Bishop to verify with his counterparts in other Annual Conferences across the United Methodist Church what they were doing to prepare pastors and congregations. He was asked to ask two questions.

- Does your Annual Conference have a written policy for making cross-racial, cross cultural appointments? (Besides the information in the Board of Ordained Ministry handbook and the information from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
- Does your Annual Conference have an orientation process for pastors and families and congregations that are going into cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments?

He agreed to forward all responses to the author. As a result, she received seven responses. Overall, the data she received from her colleague and the data from other Annual conferences answered the questions that were asked of the focus group, the support group and the one on one interviews.

Analysis of the Data

As data was collected the author started asking herself some questions about how she might begin to categorize the answers she had received from the participants. As she started to transcribe her data and typed up her field notes she

sought to determine if there were patterns and themes emerging. She read and re-read through all of her data and started to organize them into categories.

Her analysis focused on how groups of individuals responded to questions related to the need for pastors and congregations to receive intentional preparation and support when involved in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. The author noticed several themes that emerged. The themes were:

- The need for intentional preparation for the pastors including an assessment process
- The need for intentional preparation for the congregation including training for specific leaders
- The need for intentional support and resources from the judicatory
- The need for covenant groups for support
- The opportunity these appointments create to dialogue and address systemic racism in the church.

As an outcome of this project, the work of preparing pastors and congregations for cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments in our Annual Conference is just beginning. A conference is being planned for the fall and the support group is continuing to meet. Also, for the first time as the Office of Ministerial Services has its annual orientation for new and moving pastors, there will also be an orientation for pastors being appointed to cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments.

CHAPTER SIX
REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION
Reflections and the Field Experience

The focus of this project was to discover what is necessary for creating an intentional system of support and resourcing for pastors being appointed to and serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. The author's annual conference currently does not have an intentional process. Differences may vary from district to district and nothing systematic is done from an Annual Conference level.

What the author has learned is that there are at least five areas that will be important to preparing pastors and congregations to faithfully engage the work of making sure the church leadership is open to all people. It will be helpful if the Annual Conference, pastors and congregation take the following considerations in mind:

- It will be important for the Bishop and District Superintendents to take seriously the pastoral leaders that it selects to serve in these appointments. Determining pastor readiness will be imperative. The author learned that adaptability is a characteristic that will go a long way in creating relationships in the cross-racial, cross cultural church. Most of the persons who listed this as a vital trait say that this is something that you cannot teach. It is something with which a person is born.
- Pastoral leaders though they will be in a new setting must continue to be themselves. They must be authentic in their relationship with their new congregation. They should not attempt to use language and behavior that betrays their own identity. They must know who they are and be comfortable enough not to try to change in order to accommodate someone else's idea of what they should be.

- It will be helpful to choose pastors who have a passion for this work. They more readily seek to understand the ethos of the congregation and know how to build trust among the congregants. Additionally, the pastor should be flexible, a good listener and have a sense of humor. When choosing pastors the judicatory should take into consideration the pastor's cross-racial, cross-cultural experience. If a person has little or no familiarity with other races and cultures it is possible that they would have a more difficult time adjusting.
- Knowing how to negotiate power dynamics is another skill set useful in these settings. As change happens in a congregation a lot of issues of power and control surface. Parishioners may try to flex their church power muscles to show that they are still in control. This is a time when the pastor must develop thick skin while having a loving heart.
- After being clear on seeking out particular characteristics for pastoral leadership, then the preparation of pastors should include an assessment process. That process could include an assessment during initial consideration by the District Superintendents and or the Bishop. An assessment team could also be trained assessors whom the Bishop and District Superintendents would rely on to make an evaluation of the candidate to be appointed to a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment.
- There are also assessment tools to measure the capacity for serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings. The author learned about a tool called the "Intercultural Development Inventory" that assesses a person's "intercultural competence. The inventory can be used for a variety of purposes, including individual assessment, group analysis, and organizational needs assessments. This tool could be one of the several ways that there is some deliberate attention given to equipping pastors to serve in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments.
- An added component in the preparation of pastor is for them to have a covenant community to which they can be accountable to. They can share their stories; reflect on ministry, brainstorm ideas and just fellowship with colleagues who understand their setting. It is good for them to have a support group that helps them navigate this change in their lives. Often pastors serving these appointments become alienated from friends, so it is important they not become isolated.

Other Recommendations

Although the project focused less on preparing congregational leaders it was one of the specifics that emerged as an area to receive attention. It is critical for the success of cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments to have leaders that are open to change. Several of the respondents in the survey suggested that in the United Methodist Church, the chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations committee could be coached to lead the congregation through this type of change. In addition, there could be a series of conversations with the congregation about reaching the mission field.

Another deliberate action that can take place where the community is transitioning is to have a conversation with the church as they begin to experience change and do some visioning around that change. Perhaps examining the trajectory of attendance and the demographics that are changing can aid the church in gaining clarity around direction for the future. The pastor could also lead the congregation in a bible study about the mission of the church.

A simple but effective way for the congregation to grow in their understanding of another's culture is to share in a meal together. One Annual Conference pastor and his lay leader organized a pot luck dinner in which members brought dishes from their own cultures. This caused members to think about how food is important to their culture and it also helped the congregation learn about the diversity of the congregation. This provided an opportunity for the pastors and congregation to learn together.

Other efforts that can be employed by the congregation are to learn the needs of the community and deploy a team to intentionally go out and engage what's happening in

their area. This enables the church to explore the culture of the neighborhood and the culture of their pastor at the same time.

In churches where the community is not transitioning and there is not the expectation of the church changing there may still need to be some type of orientation and intentional effort by the congregation to become familiar with the culture of the newly appointed pastor.

The judicatory, in this context, the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church can be more purposeful in supporting and resourcing pastors by encouraging all churches to live out the great commission to reach all people. Some of the ways that the respondents said the Conference could be more intentional is to create a cross-racial, cross-cultural committee.

This committee would resource churches by conducting workshops and training. It could also keep the Conference aware of needs that exist with churches that are involved in cross-racial, cross-cultural ministry. There would be teams of clergy and laity who could assist churches who want to begin to address the change that is happening in their church and community. They also could host an annual event for churches and pastors to reflect on their experiences and share new information on ministry.

Another vital entity in the judicatory that can help these transitions go smoother is District Superintendents. They can be critical in identifying both churches and pastors ready for these appointments. They can be supportive when pastors are dealing with conflict. And, they can be the one who checks in with and follows up with churches and pastors. These congregations and pastors need the wisdom and support of their District Superintendents. They often are catalysts for progress in these settings.

The gift of the connectional system is that there are many resources available to promote professional and personal growth. In our annual conference we have an assessment process for determining whether a pastor would be a good fit for starting a new church. After they are assessed and deemed a good fit, we send them to a basic training course in starting new churches. Several of the persons suggested that we should have the same type of course for pastors assigned to cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. The author believes this would be a great idea.

Whatever the judicatory decides to do, it should be a diligent, consistent, planned approach with follow up. There should also be an ongoing evaluation of processes that are taking place as it relates to cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments.

One of the issues that emerged for the author in her context is the consideration of how these appointments play out in a Southern Culture. These appointments give the church the opportunity to live into its' rhetoric of being a church that practices open itinerancy. Cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments can help address the historic and systemic racism and say to people that being open to these appointments is an important principle of the church. As this particular context continues to grow more diverse, preparing churches can create a space where racial and cultural dialogue can happen. Making these appointments, particularly in transitioning communities can give churches an opportunity to transform with the community.

The author has taken the above mentioned areas of importance that emerged through conversations with the various groups of people she observed and interviewed and is designing an uncomplicated initial process for the Annual Conference to begin using until a permanent process can be put in place.

APPENDIX A

**INFORMATION SENT TO DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL
MINISTRIES TO SHARE WITH THE EXTENDED CABINET**

CROSS-RACIAL- CROSS-CULTURAL APPOINTMENTS

NORTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE

Current Realities

Historically appointments have been limited by ethnic/racial identities. There have been some exceptions to the norm but the number has not been great.

Often “the numbers do not match up”. For example the number of African American clergy (elders) needing appointments exceeds the number of available African American congregations. Therefore, cross-cultural-cross racial appointments are inevitable.

There are expressed difficulties in these appointments because there is no intentional structured preparation of pastor and congregations. Issues of power and control, congregational identity, worship style, and evangelism to the surrounding community cause frustrations for both pastor and people.

Ethnic/Racial clergywomen also tend to be appointed to cross-cultural-cross racial appointments.

With the growing number of Latino and Asian populations we are experiencing increasing numbers of cross-racial-cultural-cross appointments of associate pastors to address the desire and need of congregations to be welcoming to all people. Also the history of mission churches involving these racial ethnic populations being housed in majority culture facilities has been common. Because of some issues evolving from these types of arrangements there has been expressed needs to change the way we do this.

This issue cannot be addressed by one action or quickly fixed. Often we try to address the issue of cross racial cross cultural appointments with technical solutions (reading a book, getting training, taking a class). We must also address this issue, which really is an adaptive issue through discerning whether churches and pastors have the desire and capacity to be effective in cross racial cross cultural settings. This involves speaking truth both to pastors and congregations. Also, it is important to see cross-racial-cross-cultural appointments as part of our missional priority task as the people of God. This would necessitate a change of culture in our Annual Conference.

Suggestions for initial actions for developing a sustainable process

- There is a need initially for a cross-racial appointment facilitating committee to be organized at the conference level to assist congregations, pastoral teams and clergy families in preparation for a positive movement into cross-racial appointments. This committee would serve as a resource in preparatory meetings to the

appointment and would provide follow-up resources as needed. There needs to be a coordinated and committed effort of everyone involved to make this a reality. (from *Many Faces, One Church*, pg. 35, number 7)

- There is a need for a support group of pastors and families already in cross-racial appointments.
- Connectional Ministries could provide training for those pastors and congregations who exhibit the desire and capacity to be effective in cross-racial-cross-cultural settings.
- There should be developed guidelines and procedures for cross-racial-cross-cultural appointments. Including such items as:
 - Biblical and Theological Foundations
 - Book of Discipline Mandates
 - Support of Bishop and Cabinet
 - How to prepare all churches for openness
 - Identifying Churches and Pastors who are ready to engage in this work by looking for signs of readiness in congregations, signs of readiness in pastors who will prepare churches for inclusiveness, signs of readiness in pastors who will be appointed cross-racially-cross-culturally, and district superintendents who watch constantly for signs of readiness for cross-racial-cross-cultural appointments, either by identifying churches or by listening for volunteer churches.
 - Preparing specific churches and pastors (taking specific steps once churches have been identified over a designated period of time)
 - Support for cross-racial-cross-cultural appointments. Church support through affirmation, celebration, training and support for pastor-parish relations committees. Pastor support through a support groups for pastors and their families. Financial support for salary or program needs, and assistance for financial planning.

Curriculum Resources

Meeting God at the Boundaries by Lucia Ann McSpadden (book and workbook)

Many Faces One Church: A Manual for Cross-Racial and Cross Cultural Ministry by Ernest Lyght, Glory Dharmaraj, and Jacob Dharmaraj

Resources from the Alban Institute

Assessment Tools for Cultural Preparedness

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (The Pacific Northwest Conference uses this)

Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)

Mentoring /Nurturing Program

Identify mentors who can walk alongside pastors and congregations in their initial stages of cross-racial-cross-cultural appointments.

Suggestions for Immediate Action

- Gather pastors in December 2009 or January 2010 who are already in cross-racial-cross cultural appointments for a focus group type of conversation to gather information and suggestions that would be informative for the cabinet, pastors and congregations. Prior to the gathering send out a questionnaire to complete to inform and guide the conversation.
- Connectional Ministries design and set up training opportunity for pastors already in cross-racial appointments in the first quarter of 2010. Use people resources from the Annual Conference, our United Methodist Seminaries and Colleges in Georgia. Also access denominational resources like the General Board of Higher Education and the Intentional Growth Center at Lake Junaluska.
- Establish support group for pastors and their families and churches. Have a initial one or two day retreat in the first quarter of 2010.(One Annual Conference started with an annual support group retreat for pastors and then later realized they also needed to include laity from the congregation as part of the retreat.)

APPENDIX B

EMAIL LETTER FOR STARTING CROSS-RAICAL CROSS-CULTURAL TASK GROUP

Hello Colleagues,

I trust that you are well today. I wanted to be in touch with you about a planning task group our office is establishing to work on several issues related to cross-racial-cross-cultural appointments. This is being done at the direction of the cabinet and we would like to see at least three items accomplished in the first quarter of 2010. They are:

- Gather pastors in January 2010 who were previously or currently in cross-racial-cross cultural appointments for a focus group conversation to gather information and suggestions that would be informative for the cabinet, pastors and congregations. Prior to the gathering send out a questionnaire to complete that would inform and guide the conversation on the day of the focus group. This information would also be used to establish some guidelines and best practices when making cross-racial-cross cultural appointments.
- Connectional Ministries design and set up training opportunity for pastors currently in cross-racial appointments in the first quarter of 2010. Use people resources from the Annual Conference, our United Methodist Seminaries and Colleges in Georgia. Also access denominational resources like the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the Intentional Growth Center at Lake Junaluska.
- Establish a support group for pastors and their families and churches. Have a initial one or two day retreat in the first quarter of 2010. (One Annual Conference started with an annual support group retreat for pastors and then later realized they also needed to include laity from the congregation as part of the retreat.)

Because of your experience and interest in this area, we are inviting you to be a part of this task group. We believe that you can help us work out the details for this very important work in our Annual Conference. As we progress I am sure that we will add more people based on tasks that need to be accomplished. As you may know, the 2008 General Conference passed new legislation regarding cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. The new legislation emphasizes the Church's commitment to open itinerancy and inclusiveness and provides a definition of cross racial and cross-cultural appointments. It also requires annual conferences to prepare and train clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross cultural appointments. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry has resources to assist annual conferences, pastors and churches with preparation and training.

We would like to have a meeting in the first or second week of January to begin our work. If you are willing to be a part of this task group, please respond to this email. Once I receive your response then I will send out dates for a meeting.

Blessings and Joy,

Renita Thomas
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APPENDIX C

EMAIL LETTER TO POTENTIAL FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Dear Pastors,

Per our conversation, this is an invitation to participate in a focus group of pastors who are serving in appointments that are or were considered cross-racial or cross cultural. We want to hear from you about your experiences that would be helpful as the cabinet makes appointments and as congregations and pastors live out their ministry together. Below are some questions that you can be thinking about that can guide our conversation.

What is your story?

- *Good, Bad, Ugly*

What are/were your expectations?

- *Have they been met?*
- *How do you rate your experience?*

What are the issues that concern you?

- *Justice, fairness, etc.*

What can you teach us?

- *Did you know what you were doing?*
- *Do you know what you have done?*
- *Did you have a choice?*

This conversation is a part of the work of a task group working to address several issues related to cross racial, cross racial appointments. At the 2008 General Conference there was new legislation passed regarding cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. The new legislation emphasizes the Church's commitment to open itinerancy and inclusiveness and provides a definition of cross racial and cross cultural appointments. It also requires annual conferences to prepare and train clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross cultural appointments. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry has resources to assist annual conferences, pastors and churches with preparation and training.

The focus group is the beginning of moving toward addressing an expressed need in our Annual Conference. Our goals are: a) having a written policy that can guide the cabinet and congregations; b) developing training and curriculum that would be available to pastors and congregations when appointments are made; c) establishing a support group for pastors, their families and congregations who wish to participate in such a group; and d) the possibility of mentor/coaches for churches and pastors in cross racial and cross cultural appointments.

We will meet in the United Methodist Center Building in the Davis Room at the Simpsonwood Retreat Center. We will meet on *February 18th*, from 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. We hope that you can join us. Please respond to this email if you plan to attend.

Blessings,

Renita Thomas on behalf of the Task Group for Cross Racial and Cross Cultural Appointments

APPENDIX D
RESPONSES FROM FOCUS GROUP CONVERSATION

What type of preparation should there be for pastors serving in cross racial, cross cultural appointments?

- **Helpful Processes for Annual Conference**
 - Orientation for pastors
 - Pulpit Exchanges
 - Establish an Annual Conference Cross-Racial, Cross-Cultural Committee
 - Clear understanding of an open appointment (system)

- **Helpful Processes for Pastors**
 - Be Upfront
 - Practice your own spiritual disciplines, including prayer
 - Get a Mentor/ No Lone Rangers
 - Find an accountability group
 - Be Flexible – Learn to study church culture
 - Be a student. Assess setting and be awareness of dynamics
 - Don't change too many things too quickly
 - Don't impose your idea of worship on the congregation
 - Remember your Pastoral Care Training
 - Live in the community
 - Have a sense of self-awareness and self confidence, be authentically you
 - Serve as associate pastor then transition into senior pastor role

What type of preparations should be available to congregations receiving a pastor of a different racial or cultural background?

- **Helpful for Annual Conference**
 - Orientation for Congregation
 - Create an atmosphere in the Annual Conference where racial dialogue can take place. Bishop and Cabinet offer support
 - Identify churches ready to make the shift
 - Cabinet determines an objective framework of readiness of congregation
 - Identify different types of cross racial, cross cultural appointments
 - Community transitioning
 - Matching pastors gifts with church's need
 - Declining Church
 - Have a group go the church before appointment
 - Ongoing sessions of diversity training for church from outside resources
 - Train the SPRC specifically
 - Inclusive in all areas

- **Helpful for Church**

- Staff Parish Relations Committee highlights the gifts of the pastor
- Pastor prior to the new pastor prepares the congregation
- Small support to support the pastor

What type of assessment should there be for pastors serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments?

- Look at previous cross-racial, cross-cultural experience of pastor
- Look at worldview of pastor
- Assessing pastors helps assure that pastor and congregation are a fit
- Make sure that we are not appointing brokenness to brokenness in these appointments
- Cabinet and Bishop should consider financial implications for these appointments

What have you learned that will help others as they serve in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments?

- Share blessings, share stories
- Be accountable; remember you are there by God's will
- Be willing to give people room to be in conversation
- Develop a sense of humor
- You must build relationships before talking about the tough issues
- Seek to meet the needs of the congregations
- Remember the commonality of the human condition
- Be more open in the admission of racism and name that
- Don't lose your identity
- Learn how to live in and manage stress
- Seize teachable moments
- Share offenses in a respectable way
- Be intentional about setting boundaries
- Adapt and diversify leadership positions in the church
- Pastor and church make a 5 year minimum commitment from beginning
- Remember seeds are being planted even though people ask for a change

How can we care for one another as we serve in these appointments?

- Mentoring
- Blogging
- Meet regularly with the CRCC committee
- Events should be a whole day
- Develop a covenant group – a diverse group for sharing different cultural perspectives
- Have a conference on CR/CC
- Spiritual Director
- Being intentional about praying for each other

- Annual Conference being intentional about pastoral support
- Be sure pastors don't become isolated

Raw Data from Focus Groups

Question 1: What type of preparation should there be for pastors serving in cross racial, cross cultural appointments?

Have a sense of confidence that allows openness to each other's cultures. Study the culture to make joining in more efficient. Flexibility is a key. Don't try to change too much, too quickly. Mentors would be helpful. Pastoral Care Teaching. Support Group of pastor who have experience. Congregation become inclusive in their leadership, committee structures, power sharing, etc.

Be intentional about learning. Just because were UMC, doesn't mean we all do it the same way. Traditional training – should not matter gender, ethnicity- but in congregations it does not matter! Pastors don't need to make that call. – How does the conference prepare, create an atmosphere of racial dialoging, have a week's weeks dialog with laity, speak with families, creative mentoring. I don't know if you can. 1st appointment, I had no idea. Need for debriefing process. Appointments made behind doors.

Education about church and community/family. Learn about different traditions. Learn their stories/experience their struggles. Understand the cultures. You assure they know your culture. Church story/history. Practice your own spiritual discipline-imbalance. Calling- to transition – we will be transitional. Covenant Group. Know the culture, Get a Sense of the congregation. Prayerful – to be God's Vessel. Don't oppose your understanding of worship. Recognize how cultures worship. Discern culture-be yourself.

Question 2: What type of preparations should be available to congregations receiving a pastor of a different racial or cultural background?

Make certain the church really wants a pastor from another culture. Bring in consultant trainer with ongoing sessions. Need to train D.S.'s and share codes. D.S. support for pastors and good communication from DS is critical. Train SPRC to receive new pastor.

Intentionality, prepare church to receive. Don't know how realistic.

Question 3: What type of assessment should there be for pastors serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments?

Personality type – openness, flexibility for another culture. Do their gifts and graces match for church's needs? What is the pastor's worldview? Person whose experience is limited to one culture may need care.

Assessed. Define how comfortable. Who is doing it? Of the situation is the question. Are you putting brokenness with brokenness? Family.

Question 4: What have you learned that you feel will help others as they serve in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings?

When we have done our best and hear “we want a change”, that people are saying they can’t cope, not that you have failed. It’s more about the congregation than about you. You have planted seeds for change.

Events like this should be a whole day. The emotions emerge. Healing needs to be done.

Developed a sense of humor. Empowerment comes from people in power. Willing to give people some room.

Question 5: How can we care for one another as we serve in these appointments?

Not allow for isolation.

Form covenant groups

Keep pastor in the setting at least 5 years, conference needs to make the commitment

Admit that there are racists among the membership of our churches.

A place to be in conversation.

APPENDIX E
ONE ON ONE INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEWS

Seminary Professor who has consulted with pastors and congregations in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments

- Yes there should be some preparation for pastors serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments. It gives a rationale for the appointments and a way of addressing the issue of historic racism in the church. It says “no more” of this systemic racism. It is one way of saying we are being open to these appointments and it is an important principle of the church.
- Congregational resistance should not be a criterion for not making these appointments. One of the gifts of a connectional system is that it can take seriously the connection. It can help people understand what it means to be the church. It can say racial identity does not supersede Christian identity. It then becomes an injustice not to prepare pastors.
- Yes you can initially choose churches that show some characteristics and factors that suggest here is a place that is leaning toward openness. But you should not just choose churches that are leaning toward this type of change.
- The Annual Conference should recognize that some churches will need racial pastors and that it could be an insult to send a majority pastors to a major black church if that pastor has no identity with the history and understanding of church and community ethos.
- Pastors as they serve cross-racial, cross-culturally should identify the history and the gifts of the church they are appointed to. They should concentrate on being themselves and not fake being connected to the church’s tradition. Do not try to use language, behavior and phrases that betray your own identity just to try and fit in. It is ok to claim one’s own identity. Be a listener; be guided by what you hear. Be there to understand the tradition and history of the church. Be careful what dynamics are at play. Seek to understand the ethos of the congregation. Know that there will be many moments of awkwardness. Do not rush into making a connection. Connections will come with time. Be careful who you consult. Choose a mentor who can help you reflect on your ministerial engagement in that appointment.
- Yes assessments could be helpful, but it might be that all ministerial candidates should take this. It can be a way of preparing new leaders that might find themselves in diverse settings. It can help them look at their cultural sensitivity. They can look at how they view a culture different from their own experience. They can discover strategies to employ as they live among someone who is different from them. This can also be a way of assessing how the Annual Conference itself is doing with readiness to provided needed support to pastors and churches.

- How can we support each other? We should remember the gift of the connectional system. We must attend to those serving in a new culture. It will be important for morale for the pastor and their family. What should I have asked? Find data on what is happening in the larger church. What are the most positive things that they have seen that are working.

Pastor serving in a second cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment. His first appointment was as an associate to a non-transitioning community and the second is in a transitioning community

- His district superintendent told him that his name might come up for a cross-racial appointment. He was appointed as an associate in an all white church with no other African American members. He met with the district superintendent, the pastor and the staff parish committee.
- His second appointment the district superintendent told him that is church was in a transitioning community and the church had the opportunity to transition with this community. What has occurred is the church has acknowledged this, but they say they are not ready to transition. They are blue collar workers. One member recently told him that he was the first African American that he had ever been around.
- This pastor feel like the church should be prepared or you learn lessons the hard way. The church must understand what it means to be the church and that the church's mission field is changing. It doesn't have to be a moment of white flight but can be a model of change. The pastor should have a conversation with a church about how they feel. You should talk people through their tense feeling and it also helps the pastor be aware of the mood of the congregation. This pastor feels that having been at one cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment helped him in this setting. The pastor notes that because he served in a cross-racial, cross-cultural church before he was able to lead from a position of confidence rather than a place of fear.
- This pastor feels that the Annual Conference should do a better job of identifying pastors who feel called to this work. They should also take into consideration the pastor's experiences. An assessment process would prove helpful to pastors. The pastors should learn how to have a conversation with the church about the loss of power. There should be a committee that works with the church every six months and looks at how things are progressing with them. There could be pastors who have experience in this work could meet with staff parish relations committees to coach them. Also pastors need mentors and colleagues that can talk with them through a certain lens, a sort of confidant who has been through the same thing.
- What this pastor has learned that he can pass on to others: Build relationship with people so that they know that you value them and that you are not there to make

them leave their church. Pastors need to be comfortable with cultural difference and at the same time be comfortable with who you are. You should nurture your own sense of identity and stay connected to who you are. Don't force your style of worship on the church; invite them to experience a different style. Give consideration to the congregation because their world is changing and being turned upside down. The pastor must remember it is not about them. They must develop thick skin and a loving heart. They must remember that some people have never encountered a person of a different race. They must recognize teachable moments and there will be a lot of them. People have varying experiences and the pastor can help people grow through and beyond the experience. The pastor can help them remember that the first goal is to make disciples of Jesus.

- Serving in a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment shows that an African American can provide effective, power leadership. You must stay connected to your ethnic identity.
- Do not get involved in the political conversations, keep it spiritual. Do not do this ministry by alone, build relationships, and share what is hurtful. A boot camp for cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments would be good. We should continue the covenant group.
- Serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment can be alienating from friends who are not.

Pastor serving in a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment as the second cross-racial, cross-cultural pastor appointed to this church in a transitioning community

- He was assigned to a church that was ninety percent white and older. He was told by his district superintendent that they did not want another black pastor. He was given a book to read, but no other preparation. He thinks the congregation should also receive preparation. He thinks that there should have been more involvement from the district and conference. First prepare congregation by saying this is a demographics of the community now. Helping them to understand that the church and the community has changed. Helping them to see the church as it is now, not as it was. They spend so much time fighting to hold on to what was that they have a hard time seeing that the culture has changed around them and they feel lost. Some of the congregation is in denial and some are willing to have the conversation. Some of his congregants viewed receiving a black pastor as punishment.
- One way of preparing churches for the change is to make changes in the leadership of the local church offers who are open. It can help others adjust and adapt to the change. His staff parish relations chairperson was such a person. She did not ask the District Superintendent about the racial identity of the pastor, but

asked about a certain type of pastor with the characteristics to help the church grow

- In choosing pastors to serve in this setting, you should choose pastors who have a passion for this work. Maybe consider the seminaries that they graduate from.
- The annual conference could have teams of people to look at this issue and share with people who are going through difficult transitions. He thinks there should be a recruitment process. Look for persons who want to serve multi-cultural churches. They are less likely to be taken aback by the cultural shock and resistance. The concern at this church was about race plus generational gaps in the church. There was a culture shift.
- He sees his appointment to this church as a matter of convenience for the Annual Conference. They were at an impasse with previous pastor and he got caught up in the move. He had never thought of serving in a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment. The people didn't want another black pastor and that concerned him. It was a personal adjustment for him. It put him in a defensive position. Every problem did not have to be interpreted racially. His staff parish chairperson gave him another way of looking at certain situations. He gave her permission to speak frankly to him.
- Learning to pass on: Don't expect change too quickly. Change will be subtle. Get to know the people. There may be a façade at first. Be willing to change. If you make a mistake, apologize. If people know you care, they will put up with your mistakes.
- How can we support each other in this work: Have a mentor process. Have a covenant group.
- His hope for the congregation is that he stays another two years. He is starting to see the whole spirit of the church change. He feels he is setting the foundation and another person could come in and take it to another level. He wants to see more diversity in worship and for people not to walk out on the youth dancers.

Superintendent with five cross-racial, cross cultural appointments in his district

- Pastors need preparation. One of his pastors went from serving in a large membership black church to a small membership white church. This is culture shock. There is not enough done for preparation. There is a difference in style of leadership in the black church (direct) and white church (ask). This pastor has seen one leadership style. The pastor was given no orientation, resources, no course, no books (given after the fact), not given enough supervision and did not prepare the congregation. The congregation was polite and then mad. The tipping point was the hiring of new staff. It was all black. In this situation they did not look at the demographics.

- Another church there was no preparation. First appointee did not work out. Second appointee's leadership style was different.
- Two other churches he felt like the retired white pastor help the transition go smoother.
- Church with a Korean woman pastor in an Anglo church is going well.
- What kind of leader is good for this type of church? A person who can adapt to the church, not make the church adapt to the preacher's style. A person who is teachable and trainable and who can build trust. We should develop a boot camp for cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments like we have a boot camp for new church start pastors.

Director of Ministerial Services

- Do analysis when making the appointment. Reframing what a training event might look like. The senior pastor must be highly adaptable.
- What has Ministerial Services done through Board of Ordained Ministry? This office has not done well with preparing pastors for these appointments. In his experience when he was a senior pastor, he had two associates who were brave and had success in their appointments. He feels the senior pastor must be highly adaptable. When selecting pastors to serve in these appointments we must find who's adaptable. Finding out who is adaptable can be a useful screening device. We must find pastors who have the ability to be supervised, sometimes this does not show up until twenty years down the road until you ask them to go and serve in one of these appointments. In choosing who pastors to serve you should pay attention to their history and characteristics.
- Do we need to prepare pastors? Yes. It gives the church a prophetic voice. Another pastor said to him that we need to plan eighteen months in advance. We need to make these types of appointments. In his setting when he was a senior pastor he saw one cross-racial, cross-cultural pastor as the person who helped the transition of another cross-racial, cross-cultural person come on staff. It became regular, the Methodist way.
- It is important to prepare persons but you must take into consideration knowledge, skills (what they can learn in a training event), abilities and personal character (how they are wired, like adaptability, teachable spirit, honesty, ethical behavior). There is a difference in training and adaptability. You can teach training but not adaptability.
- Some of the next steps in preparation should be perhaps using a process like we already have with our new church development assessment process. In the next five years we should think about how we prepare for that. It will help us to look at how well we know people as we appoint them to these appointments. It will call

for new language and new tools for connecting people. We need some successes and a new generation of leadership.

- What kind of support do we need for pastors and congregations? We need wounded healer coaches and mentors. You solve relational problems relationally. Pastors need to understand how you create your own support. It is helpful to have guideline. Pastors need to have the skill set for negotiating the power dynamics.
- The part that the judicatory can play in these appointments is to think globally and act locally. They should pay attention to the relationship that is already there. It should not be a top down decision. This is God's action in the world. This decision should come from the local level. It should be something that happens and is claimed at a local church level. Anything else that I should have asked: The possibility with the Methodist is great. On our good days we are learning to invite our neighbors and to be a more open and inviting community of faith.

Bishop from our Annual Conference

- There are currently 18 churches with cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments, out of nine hundred sixteen charges in this conference.
- What type of leaders do we need in these appointments? The Bishop says the first concern is that any pastor being appointed should possess the quality of adaptability and be flexible as they engage their new setting. The pastor must be willing to discover and adapt to the culture and customs of that particular congregations. He says this is accentuated in a cross-racial, cross-cultural setting. Both pastor and congregants must show respect, accommodation and appreciation for the other. The pastor might be required to do additional study on the congregation that they will be serving. It will be important to look and listen; love the people; participate in their events; be there when they are hurting and rejoicing. The difference tends to fades away when people feel loved and cared for.
- Pastors must understand the complexity of serving in these appointments. They must have an appreciation for diversity, seeing difference as interesting, not bad. It is an opportunity to broaden their world view and thrive. It becomes the hallmark of who they are and they live into it with joy. They approach it with exhilaration and patience. Pastors must also understand that not everyone is called to do this work and there will be times when there is pain, frustration and hurt.
- What role should the judicatory play? The Bishop affirms that this is already a part of the District Superintendents responsibility. They work with pastors and can identify those with fruits and attitudes that would work well in different settings. They have to say to the church and the pastor that they are in the boat with them. It says to the staff parish committee, I am on this committee with you also. I am a resource and an insider also. The District Superintendent should have

an open ear and listen more than they advise. Sometimes having someone to listen to you can be a bridge to understanding what is going on with a particular situation in your setting.

- Should pastors participate in a training opportunity before being appointed to cross-racial, cross-cultural settings? What type of training? The Bishop believes it would be helpful if it is an honest and open time. A basic course in sensitivity training for both parishioners and clergy would be helpful.
- What question should I have asked you? What have we learned that hasn't worked?

Bishop from another Annual Conference

- There are eleven churches with cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments, out of nine hundred churches in his conference.
- It is important for pastors to receive preparation. It is important that local churches are ready to speak truth. The staff pastor parish relations committee can be used to do this. Sometimes the appointment making is strengthened by the congregation not know so that they will not build momentum against the appointment. What can be helpful is the tenure of the staff pastor parish relations chairperson. Let them stay in that position long enough to help lead the congregation through this type of change. The pastor needs support, a mentor or coach trainer and a covenant group to help them navigate this change in their lives. Some already have the unique ability to adapt to this change. They need a district superintendent who understands the complexities and can lead with understanding. Pastors who have served in these appointments and have navigated them effectively can be supportive.
- Type of Leaders we need for these appointments: Need a leader who has a clear understanding of who they are. They must have an openness to learn and be a person who is non judgmental. They must be a good administrator and must be good in congregational care. They need to be flexible in their preaching style. They need to be an adaptive learner, otherwise it is difficult.
- What role does the judicatory have? It must be clear in their hearts that this is a good appointment. They should not make the appointment just to demonstrate inclusivity. They should make sure that the person is a fit and consider the needs of the congregation. If they believe in the appointment then they need to stay with it for the long haul. If there is fallout then they need to pick up the tab and know when to lead and know when to be patient.
- The district superintendent should meet with the pastor regularly and work with the staff parish relations committee to maintain readiness of the congregation. They need to meet with the staff parish chairperson face to face. They need to help coach the chairperson to talk with the influencers in the congregation to get

support. Traditionally we have not done enough. We have no systemic planned approach and no follow up.

- Assessment process: Should all new pastors coming into the ordained process have to take an assessment tool like the IDI? Assessment tool like the IDI and others can make you aware of your own prejudices. There needs to be follow-up once you take the assessment. Using tools like the ones Eric Law provides can be helpful and can help transform their lives. We need to do a better assessment of readiness of the pastor. We give them an idea of what we want to see from them going into the appointment.
- If we required all incoming pastors to become racially and culturally sensitive then it would give us leverage as bishops to say to pastors that they knew they might have to serve this type of appointment. One of his Episcopal colleagues says that baptism deputizes you into ministry and in the membership vows of the church Christ has opened the church to all. With cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment, this can move from just a saying to reality. Maybe we can open up some appointments through missionaries who are bi-lingual. We need to invest more into the world that God is creating in the United States that is becoming a multi-ethnic society.

Young Adult Pastor serving as an Associate in a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment and has served as a youth pastor in two other cross-racial, cross-cultural settings. Also her mother and father both served in cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments.

- This pastor shared that first you must remember that in the Deep South in particular it is hard to get over the “race thing”. It can be a painful experience. It can be an alienating and desert kind of place. Sometimes you have to wrestle with where you belong. A pastor must have thick skin. What can be helpful is to tell and share stories. Pastors must come in with no assumptions and learn to listen deeply. You must keep your word in order to build trust. Pastors need preparation when serving cross-racially and cross-culturally because you will encounter a different language, passive aggressive behavior, a different way of conducting meetings, and a different way of negotiating. There are distinct cultural differences. For example, your culture might relate to pastor more formally and the church you were sent to serve in might relate to the pastor more informally. Pastors must also understand that people might not always know how they have offended you. You must be patient enough to educate persons.
- This pastor felt that not only the pastor but church should go through cultural competency training that includes cultural and communication differences. The staff parish committee should play a great role in seeking clarity when there is conflict. What is heard is not always what is being said. Part of the church’s job is

to reach out to the pastor and make them feel a part of the community. They should stop gossip and keep the pastor informed on what God is doing their midst.

- One of the ways that her setting began the transition to a multi-racial and multi-cultural congregation was the fact that she was appointed there as the Associate Pastor. The Senior Pastor was intentional in modeling shared leadership between the two of them. They looked for places that could open a conversation around difference and race. They talked in staff meeting about culture. They used the United Methodist Church's motto, "Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors". This pastor found that starting with pastoral care relationships and building from there gave her a greater connection with the people. She said that relationships make you less concerned about the race of a person. One of the things she discovered was that by having a person of a different race at this church it prepared the people to talk about confession and forgiveness. There were times this new relationship with a person of a different race became a point of confession for some of the congregants. And this pastor has an opportunity to operate as a priest to receive their confession around racial sin.
- This pastor felt that the judicatory should be involved in the process and be honest that there may be places that will never be ready. Yet, there are churches that could be ready. The judicatory should walk along side these pastors and churches and not only listen to those don't want difference, but be supportive of those who are open to difference. The judicatory should give some directions, rather than "sink or swim". They should generate a list for those going into these appointments of persons who have already experienced a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment. She also did some reading on her own in order to understand the context to which she was appointed.

Response from District Superintendent who prepared his church to receive a pastor of a different race.

He felt that there should be a process of preparation for the pastor being assigned to a cross-racial, cross-cultural setting and the congregations to which they would be appointed. He thought a weekend retreat would be helpful. He also thought that the pastor preparing the congregation to receive a new pastor needs training on how to prepare the congregation to receive a pastor of a different race or culture.

In preparing his congregation, he talked about it in worship, fellowship suppers, in his farewell sermon, and meetings. He talked with lay leadership and sought the commitment of the congregation to be open to receiving this new pastor. He shared with them they he had confidence in them that they would be open. He talked about how they could be a model of openness to others. He talked about healthy ways to make the transition. He also talked about the ministry of the new pastor and how he would be an asset to their

church. He allowed the congregation to talk about their questions, fears, and expectations. Some of the fears they had was would the culture of the congregation change, preaching style and whether their worship time would be lengthened. One of the most significant things he did was to talk with the children in the congregation about welcoming the new pastor. He had them prepare cards welcoming the new pastor and they presented the card to the new pastor on pastor's first Sunday at the church. He made sure the welcome reception was planned. He also gave thought of how he exited as their pastor.

He also felt that it is also the responsibility of the new pastor to be open. Sometimes the pastor comes in with an agenda and does not seek to understand the congregational culture. The new pastor is there to help the congregation live out their core values.

He also shared that he served a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment early in ministry with military families in Germany. He remembered they had him fill out an application and went through an interview and screening process before he was appointed as the pastor. So he feels that there should be an assessment process for pastors being appointed to these settings. This should be part of the judicatory's responsibility. Also, there should be some type of basic training course offered by the judicatory, maybe a weeklong, for pastors and congregations.

Email response from pastor who is now in extension ministry who served a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment as an associate in one of our largest churches

- The receiving church should designate a small care group for the cross racially appointed pastor. This can be 3-4 members who are church leaders or not, but they are willing to be good listeners, and help the pastor process what he/she is experiencing. It should be a covenantal group that the pastor may trust to keep confidences. However, the group may also become an important link in the communication between the pastor and the local church leaders.
- I also think all cross-racially appointed pastors and their D.S.s in the conference should participate in a group that meets on a regular basis (every other month, quarterly?), to discuss challenges and celebrations in order to determine which experiences may be common and may be addressed structurally.
- Prior to appointment, the cabinet should intentionally evaluate the fit of the pastor to the church (even though they are allegedly doing this for all appointments). Here's what I mean: I'm sure one of the reasons I did well at this particular church was because of my corporate background which gave me experiences working with folks just like the members of the church. In addition, in some ways, the church I came from and the one I went to were mirror images of each other. Even though they are racially and politically poles apart, there are a number of similarities in serving a relatively affluent mega-church, even down to

the “invisible folks” who were not as affluent but didn’t want most of the church to know.

Email response from a pastor now serving as a chaplain supervisor but served as an associate at large white University Campus church. I asked her, “What can you teach us?”

- The openness of the leadership is crucial, in both the pastor and the laity. Transparency and open and honest communication are major factors in whether or not acceptance will occur and productive cohesion will happen.
- All parties involved must work toward the same goal: effective ministry. There does need to be some congruence/like-mindedness and a sense of integrity between senior and associate pastor, regardless of race.
- If you expect cross-racial or cross-cultural appointments to make a difference you need to keep them in place long enough for change to happen. My thought is a minimum of seven years, which is about how long it takes a new effective pastor of any culture or race to make a positive solid difference, would work.
- One’s perspective can make or break an appointment. I went to Glenn thinking I was going there for them, to make a difference to/in them. I soon learned as I continued to pray about why I was being appointed there, that it was as much for me and my growth as it was for them and their growth. With that insight, I was in a win-win situation. As I worked on my own integrity and growth, the congregation and staff grew as well.
- One of my mantras as a Clinical Pastoral Educator who trains pastors in the art of chaplaincy, is that every pastor needs
 - a pastor who can be to them ideally who they are to their parishioners;
 - a pastoral counselor or therapist who will hear them when no one else will listen (mainly because they are paying them); and,
 - a confidential support network, comprised of family, friends, and associates—
 - some of which I knew before they became clergy and love them still, and all of whom will love me while holding me accountable.

Responses from other Annual Conferences where our Assistant to the Bishop sent out two questions for me.

Does your Annual Conference have a written policy for making cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments? (besides the information in the Board of Ordained Ministry Handbook and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry suggestions)

Does your Annual Conference have an orientation process for pastors and families, and or congregation that going into cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments?

Responses:

- Not to my knowledge. Sorry.
- We don't have a written policy other than the BOOM Handbook and GBHEM. We do have an orientation/mentoring process for clergy/families and congregations. We have used several approaches over the years, but most recently (last year) we trained teams of clergy and laity who have had good experiences in cross cultural/racial appointments to be assigned to clergy and congregations who are going into new cross cultural/racial appointment. The teams work with the clergy/family and congregation from soon after the appointment is announced through the first full year of the appointment.
- No.....sorry.
- We have been trying a couple of things. No written policies. We are however having our second annual gathering of clergy and lay leadership from churches who will receive a cross cultural/cross racial appointment in June for a day long workshop and training. In addition we have a few folks who are good at working with individual congregations and clergy who resource churches on a case by case basis. Not perfect but we are trying.
- While we do not have a policy, we do hold an annual event for preparing pastors who will be serving in a cross racial appointment.
- Our cabinet does not, as far as I know, have a specific policy dealing with cross cultural appointments. For two years, we have had an Anti-Racism Steering Committee (pulling together persons from CORR, BOM, Laity, etc.) that among other things, has taken some responsibility to resource and support churches in the cross cultural appointment process. That is, once the appointment is announced, we provide two books (Many Faces, One Church and Meeting God at the Boundaries) to the new pastor and to the SPR chair and Lay Leader of the congregation. Over the next few months, a member of our group is in telephone contact with these three people to "check-in". After six months, we repeat the check-in contacts. We are now considering how to follow-up after the first year. Both of the books have excellent practical suggestions for pastors and person in congregations. We are attempting to equip the local church to invest in these processes. Members of the Anti-Racism Steering Committee are also available to go into a local church to provide further resourcing.
- When a charge anticipates a change in pastoral leadership, the superintendent informs the staff parish committee and as necessary, key officers, of the possibility of a cross-cultural appointment. When a cross-cultural appointment is made the appointee comes to the Appointment Introduction meeting to meet the

staff parish committee. Between the announcement and the beginning of the appointment, the superintendent shall organize a cross-cultural/cross-racial workshop for the leadership of the congregation. This is to be arranged with the Commission on Christian United and Interreligious Concerns. The Annual Conference and Cabinet will help this process by providing the following training and support. A congregation wide orientation and training in the pastor's cultural background and characteristics. Training for the pastor, where appropriate, in American customs and style of ministry in rural setting. The training should deal with authority, male/female, language/phonetics, customs/traditions, and pastoral role image. The superintendent should be in regular contact with the staff parish committee. The superintendent meets with the pastor and his/her family every month for the first six months in the appointment, and thereafter as needed. The superintendent encourages area pastors to be supportive of the ethnic pastor.

- Since sending you a copy of our Cabinet's Cross Cultural Appointment Policy one of our ethnic superintendents shared with me the process that he is using. As you can tell he has collected material from various resources and some, like the articles are a bit dated and others are borrowed. A church received a cross cultural appointment last year. Someone put this together and has given his permission for it to be used. Hope this is helpful.

Author observations from meetings with pastors serving in cross –racial, cross-cultural appointments.

This is a sharing from a pastor in a cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment that is in a non transitional community. The church is traditional in their worship. He said you should go to the organizations meetings in the church so they will get to know you, otherwise they might see the appointment as an experiment. If you play it this way, they will wait for the next pastor. He says he was appointed in 2005 but became the pastor in 2009. They started wanting him to be a part of things. Before that time he had to find out about things like funerals and weddings. He says younger people in the congregation are more comfortable with change. He says you must be yourself, be comfortable with who you are. Have a sense of humor and a good understanding of what your gifts and graces are. Say to the congregation I'm here; let us get to know each other. Know the congregations mindset. Get to know the congregation where you have been appointed. One of the members called him and asked him what you we call you, African American, Black, etc. He responded what do you call me? What do I call you? That broke the ice. During this time of transition for him, he said he cared for his spiritual health, kept a journal from day one, taught a bible study, and had a friend to call, family was important, congregational friends and a good staff parish chairperson. He does feel that cabinets should prepare pastors to be in these appointments.

During this gathering the author had an opportunity to see pastors interact with each other. Before the presenter, they had an opportunity to break up in smaller groups of four and hear each other's story and pray for each other. They also spent time reflecting on what it means for them to serve in these appointments. We also had a seminary student present who is serving as a youth pastor who is black serving at a predominately black church. He is passionate about being a multi-cultural church.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE OF POSSIBLE ORIENTATION SESSION FOR PASTORS APPOINTED TO CROSS-RACIAL, CROSS-CULTURAL SETTINGS

**Sample of Possible Orientation Session for Pastors
Appointed to Cross-Racial, Cross-Cultural Settings**

Purpose: Orientation for pastors appointed to cross-racial, cross-cultural settings

- Meet Cross-Racial, Cross-Cultural Task Group Members and Pastors currently serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings
- Dialogue about pastor's perception of being assigned to this setting
- Dialogue about tools and resources available to pastors and churches
- Dialogue about difference in power perception, personal identity and communication styles within the different cultures

Outcome: At the orientation pastors will

- Connect with Cross-Racial, Cross-Cultural Task Group members and pastors currently serving in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings
- Become familiar with resources and tools available to enrich congregational life in their cross-racial, cross-cultural setting
- Become aware of or be reminded of their own understanding of personal identity, power perception and communication style

Component	Time	Description	Facilitator
Opening Prayer & Introductions	5 min	Cross-Racial, Cross-Cultural Task Group Members and Pastors	
Dialogue	15 min	To dialogue about pastor's perception of being assigned to this setting	
Dialogue	15 min	To dialogue about building capacity to communicate effectively in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings	
Dialogue	15 min	To help pastors become familiar with tools and resources available to them and their congregations	
Sample exercise for use with congregation	5 min	To help pastors and congregations dialogue about inclusion. Grace Margin diagram from Inclusion, Eric Law, pg 43	
Questions and wrap up	5 min	Questions from pastors	
How to stay connected and Closing Prayer	5 min	How to connect with the support group that is already active	

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE OF POSSIBLE TRAINING FOR CHURCHES RECEIVING CROSS-CULTURAL APPOINTMENTS

Sample of Possible Training for Churches Receiving Cross-Cultural Appointments

Purpose:

- Study the Scriptures regarding change
- Dialogue about difference in power perception, personal identity and communication styles within the different cultures
- Become aware of one's cultural iceberg

Outcome: At the end of this process the congregation will

- Understand their cultural iceberg, the differences that exist in communication styles, power perception and communication styles in different cultures
- Develop a set of a set of community principles they can uphold that will enhance their community life.
- Make a covenant to follow those principles to face change, solve conflict and thrive.

The community principles will be repeated before every meeting and followed

Component	Time	Description	Facilitator
Techniques for facilitating dialogue	30 min	(The Bush... Eric Law, Page 94)	
Small group Bible Study	45 min	To dialogue about what the Bible says about diversity, struggle in the midst of change, renewal) (I.e. Book of Acts) Different Scripture passages with questions	
Play: What color should the church be?	45 min	To help participants understand the injustice created by differences in power perception, personal identity and communication styles (Sacred Acts...Eric Law, page 145)	
A dialogue Process: Focusing on Differences in Communication Styles	2 – 3 hours	To help participants gain a deeper understanding and assess their own communication style (The Bush... Eric Law, Page 154)	
The Table Exercise	1 ½ hour (depending on group size)	To help participants better understand the concept of exploring their internal cultural icebergs (Sacred Acts...Eric Law, page 140)	
Right, Respect and Responsibilities	1-2 hours	For the community to arrive at a set of community principles they can uphold that will enhance their community life. (Inclusion, Eric Law, page 120)	
Closing Worship Service	45 min	Dedicate the community principles. Celebrate with diversity of symbols, songs, styles, etc.	

Designed by members of the Cross-Racial, Cross-Cultural Task Group
Nora Martinez and Sharma Lewis

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